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# THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS

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THE

# PRINCE OF DARKNESS.

## A ROMANCE OF THE BLUE RIDGE.

BY MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE CHANGED BRIDES," "HOW HE WON HER," "THE BRIDE'S FATE," "THE BRIDAL EVE," "THE LADY OF THE ISLE," "GIPSY'S PROPHECY," "THE BRIDE OF LLEWELLYN," "THE LOST HEIRESS," "FORTUNE SEEKER," "INDIA; OR, THE PEARL OF PEARL RIVER," "THE WIDOW'S SON," "THE HAUNTED HOMESTEAD," "VIVIA," "ALLWORTH ABBEY," "MOTHER-IN-LAW," "FATAL MARRIAGE," "WIFE'S VICTORY," "DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "THE CURSE OF CLIFTON," "THE DESERTED WIFE," "LOVE'S LABOR WON," "THE MISSING BRIDE," "THE TWO SISTERS," "THE THREE BEAUTIES," "FAIR PLAY," "FALLEN PRIDE," "RETRIBUTION."

"A dream is on my soul!
I see a slumberer crowned with flowers, and smiling,
As in delighted visions, on the brink
Of a dread chasm!"—HEMAN'S VESPERS OF PALERMO.

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# THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS;

## A ROMANCE OF THE BLUE RIDGE.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE MYSTERY.

Is this the hall? The nettle buildeth bowers,
Where loathsome toad and beetle black are seen!
Are these the chambers? Fed by darkest showers,
The shiny worm hath o'er them crawling been!
Is this the home? The owlet's dreary cry,
Unto that asking makes a dread reply!—NICOLL.

EARLY in the autumn of 18—, we were journeying leisurely through the majestic and beautiful mountain and valley scenery in the interior of Virginia.

It was near the close of a golden October day that we reached the picturesque little village of Hillsborough, situated upon a very high point of land, and in the midst of abrupt, rocky, tree-capped peaks, with green dents of fertile soil between. It was a town of rocks—founded upon rocks—hemmed in by rocks—the dwelling-houses,



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out-houses, fences, pig-pens, chicken-coops, all built of rocks of every conceivable variegated hue. It was, indeed, a beautiful and brilliant piece of mosaic work, up and down a ground of shaded green. It was as radiant and many colored as the forest in autumn, and flashed and sparkled in the golden sun like an open casket of jewels.

We reached the quaint old inn in time for a late dinner. There we expected to meet the carriage of a friend who resided at a farm about five miles distant across the mountains, and at whose house we were going to spend a few weeks. We found our friend Mrs. Fairfield, waiting for us, and as soon as dinner was over we set out for Cedar cliffs. Our road lay west through a savagely beautiful country, breaking itself up toward a lofty range of blue mountains encircling the western horizon, and behind which glowed and burned the crimson sunset sky.

We approached the celebrated pass of the Bear's Walk, from the highest point of which an extensive view of the valley was afforded. As we began to ascend the mountain, I fell into one of those indolent, pleasant, but rather selfish reveries, which the gathering shadows of twilight, the darkening scene, and the heavy, sleepy motion of

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the carriage, seemed to invite. From this reverie I was at length aroused by my indulgent companion, who, laying her hand upon my arm, and pointing across me through the window on the right, said,

"I wish you to observe that house."

We had just slowly reached the summit of the mountain, and the carriage had stopped to breathe the horses. I looked out at the window on the right. It was yet early enough in the evening, and there was light enough left to see, pitching precipitately down below us, a flight of cliffs, the bases of which were lost in abysses of twilight gloom and foliage, and the circular range of which swept round in a ring, shutting in a small, but deep and cup-shaped valley. Down in the deeps of this darkening vale loomed luridly a large old farm-house of red sand-stone. The prevalent tone of the picture was gloom. Down into a reverie about the deep, dark vale, and darker house, swooped my fancy again. The carriage was in slow motion. I drew in my head.

"Did you notice the house?"

"Yes; and through that deep sea of dark and floating shadows, itself the densest shadow, it looms like some phantom, some ghost of a dead home——"

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"Say a *murdered* home."

"I wish you wouldn't break a well-rounded sentence with any sort of improvement—ghost of a dead home about to melt away again in the surrounding gloom."

"Well said—better even than you think. Yet that old, half ruined farm-house is the centre of one of the largest, most beautiful, fertile, highly-cultivated, and productive estates in all Virginia. If you saw it under the noonday summer sun, you would see a variegated ground-view of vast fields of wheat and rye, yellow and ripening for the harvest; corn, green, waving in the sun; red-blossomed clover, pastures of blue grass rolling down the sides of the hills behind us, and stretching out on all sides of the old house, and disappearing under the bow of the circular-bounding of mountains. You hear now the mellowed tinkle of a waterfall, which, springing from the cliffs we have just left, flows down the sides of the rocks, and reaching the bottom of the cup-like vale, spreads itself into many little, clear rills, well watering its fertile fields, red pasturage, and heavy woods. This estate, with its fine water, its wealth of iron ore and coal in the encircling mountains, its abundance of game in the forest and fish in the

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river, and its immense water-power, is one of the most valuable in the Southern states. Yet in the midst of that wealthy and highly cultivated plantation stands the homestead itself a desolation!"

"Then the shadowy view of it is after all the best. Now that you have directed attention to this dark phantom of a home looming luridly from the deep shadows, I warrant that we shall hear you say that this uncouth jumble of rough hewn red sandstone and miscellaneous rubbish is no less a place than Lingston Lawn, Pomfret Park, or some other style of sonorous sound."

"No—it is only Hickory Hall."

"Oh, yes! one of the oldest mansion houses in the states—the residence, since 1610, of the oldest branch of the Lingstons, the Doverfields, or some other great family, with nothing left but their great name and great need."

"On the contrary, Hickory Hall is only the home of the Wallravens, and has been so for only a hundred years."

"Exactly—precisely—I said that. Hickory Hall, for upward a hundred years, the seat of the Wallravens, an old family, with nothing left but their old name. And now I understand why the homestead is in ruins, while the farm is in the highest state of cultivation."

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"Why, I pray you?"

"I will undertake to say that all these well-cultivated fields, rolling in richness from hence to the horizon, belong to an 'industrious, intelligent and enterprising' Yankee purchaser and settler, who came here some five or six years ago peddling mouse-traps, and has now become possessed of all this land, and whose substantial, square-built, red brick house stares one out of countenance somewhere over yonder by the side of the main road leading to market."

"Wrong again. Hugh Wallraven is one of the wealthiest, if not the very wealthiest man in Virginia. His fortune is estimated, with what truth I know not, at one million."

"Possible! I did not think there was such a private fortune in the country."

"It is said to be true, however."

"One million! why in the world, then, does he not put up a decent house? A decent house; Good! why does he not erect upon this favored spot a palace of white marble, with terraces, conservatories, pleasure gardens, fountains, groves? Fill his palace with the most beautiful and perfect works of mechanism, in the way of furniture, to be procured in Europe and Asia—with the rarest

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works of art of ancient or modern times—his conservatories with the richest exotics of all climes,—his gardens with the finest vegetables—his orchards with the utmost perfection of fruit? If I were he, with one million of dollars, I would introduce every new improvement in farming, grazing, stock breeding—I would import the best specimens of cattle, horses, poultry. I would have Welch ponies, Scotch draft horses, English hunters, and Arabian coursers. Oh! I would make myself and so many other people so happy! One million! Oh! stop—don't speak to me yet—just let me revel in the idea of one million to lavish on this magnificent spot."

"Why you unsophisticated little blockhead!"

"But why then does not this Mr. Wallraven—or rather, Judge Wallraven, or Gen. Wallraven—for I never heard of a planter, of any importance, reaching a certain period of life, without some title of distinction—why does not Gov. Wallraven do something with one million?"

"He has done something—his farm is the best cultivated in the state."

"Yes! but it should be the best stocked—the best in every particular—the model farm."

"Mr. Wallraven is a very aged man."

"Ah! he is *Mr.*, then."

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"Of course. People do not confer honors of any sort upon men like him!"

"Men like him! He is a bad man, then? perhaps a criminal, whose immense wealth and powerful family connections have enabled him to cheat the state prison of its due!"

"Mr. Wallraven has never been charged with, or even suspected of, a crime—"

"In his own proper person. 'The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children.' His father, perhaps—"

"Possessed a name that was a synonym for high honor and sterling integrity—his son, with his name, has inherited his reputation and character of strict truth and honesty."

"Ah! that is it, then! He does not cheat at cards, and therefore he has not won any of the prizes in the game of life. But to return to my first question. Why does not Mr. Wallraven, of the sterling integrity, and the pounds sterling, do something?"

"He is the best agriculturist in the state—it is his ruling passion—his occupation."

"And he lives in a wretched, old, ruinous house? Why doesn't he improve his place?"

"Pertinacious! He is an aged man of sixty years."

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"Yes! I see! And he has no children—that circumstance paralyzes his energies even more than old age!"

"How you jump to conclusions! He has a son and daughter!"

"Hum—hum—ah! well, sixty years old! His son and daughter must themselves be married, and settled off, and have children—and so, at last, he is a solitary old man, with no motive for improving and embellishing his homestead—the old house, it will keep out the rain, is quite good enough, he thinks, for the short life of the solitary old grandfather."

"Utterly wrong! His children, though past their early youth, are both still single."

I paused for a moment and then a luminous idea lighted up the whole subject, and I exclaimed, triumphantly.

"Now I have it! Now I certainly have it! He is one of those unnatural monsters, a miser Of course! why, surely! Why did I not see it at once? How it explains every thing that was difficult to understand now! How clear that answer to the enigma makes all obscurity! How consistent all seeming contradictions! He is a miser! That does not prevent him being a man

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of strict honesty, sterling integrity—yet, most certainly, he is a miser; and 'people do not confer titles of distinction upon men like him!' Yes, he is a miser! That is the manner in which he has amassed his immense property! That is also the reason why his house is suffered to fall to ruins while his farm is well cultivated—the farm will make returns, but the house will not. He has also half starved, half clothed, and half educated his children. They have grown up coarse, uncouth ignorant, unfit for good society. They are consequently not well received, and even if they were disposed to marry, he would not portion his daughter, or establish his son in business. That is the answer to the whole enigma! Now say that I have no quickness of apprehension!"

"Wonderful!"

"Ah! I have my inspirations sometimes!"

"Stupendous!"

"You are making fun of me!"

"Hem! listen. His son, Constant Wallraven, graduated at a Northern University, and made the grand tour of the Eastern continent, accompanied by a clergyman salaried to attend him. You never saw a handsomer or magnificent looking man, or one of more perfect dress and address—

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the courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword.' His daughter, Constantia Wallraven, is one of the most beautiful and elegant of women, with one of the best cultivated minds I ever met."

"You surprise and perplex me more and more —handsome, accomplished, wealthy, in the prime of life, and have never been married? but perhaps it is they that are cold?"

"Not so. They have ardent temperaments and warm affections."

"Then they are, take them all in all, not easily matched, and, of course, they are fastidious!"

"I think not; I am sure not! for, listen again, some years ago Constant fell in love with the beautiful daughter of a poor day laborer—a poor, miserable fellow who hired in harvest, or in very busy times, to work in the field with the negroes."

"Ah! now it comes!"

"Constant wished to marry her."

"Well?"

"He offered himself to the girl."

"Well?"

"And the poor, abjectly poor, father threatened to shoot the son of the millionaire if he caught him near his hut again."

"The poor father could not believe in his

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daughter's good fortune. He suspected the young man of evil designs?"

"Possibly. If he did him that wrong, he was quickly undeceived—for the very next day Hugh Wallraven, the father, called at the hut of the poor day laborer, and asked the hand of his young daughter, Ellen Dale, for his son and heir; and the poor man, with a blush of indignation, *refused* it!"

"You astonish me!"

"Hugh Wallraven then offered to settle fifty thousand dollars on the maiden, if her father would permit the match; and the pauper father refused!"

"You astound me! You positively do! What could have been the poor man's motive—enmity?"

"No! the poor creature wept bitterly while refusing his daughter to the son of his best friend and patron—and such was Hugh Wallraven to Thomas Dale."

"Perhaps this Constant Wallraven was a love-child, and the poor but honest and sternly correct father of a family upon that account despised and rejected the alliance!"

"Did I not say Hugh Wallraven had never

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been charged or even suspected of crime or vice? No! Constant was the son of his marriage; and here it is well to inform you that the father for his whole life, and the children from an early age, have been members in good standing—for persons in their condition—of the Protestant Episcopal church. If ever a family lived up to a Christian standard, it is the Wallravens."

"And yet, notwithstanding their wealth, intelligence and piety, the poorest day laborer, who is bound to them besides by a debt of gratitude and love, will not ally with one of his family!"

"Even so."

"What can be the reason of this proscription? some horrible hereditary affliction. Yes! that must be it—insanity perhaps!"

"Worse far than that!"

"Blindness!"

"Infinitely worse than that!"

"Some loathsome disease such as we read of in the East—leprosy!"

"Worse even than that, or any disease, or any sin, is this one incurable, fatal family calamity!"

"Come, there is a story connected with this doomed family—this dark phantom of a dead home——"



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"Of a *murdered* home, as I said before. Yes, there is a dark, dreadful story—a domestic tragedy!"

"Will you tell it to me?"

"Yes—or rather you shall know it! It is inevitable that you should hear it—perhaps an unjust version of it, and as one very, very near and dear to me is intimately connected with the whole affair, in justice to him you shall have the truth. We are near Cedar Cliffs now. In a few minutes we shall reach the house."

It was dusk.

There is something mysteriously pleasing to me in approaching in the dusk of the evening a strange country house, in which I expect to stay awhile.

As the carriage stopped before the house about to become our temporary home, we looked out with vague interest and curiosity in the blackness of the night; but we could discover nothing but indistinct and shadowy shapes, suggestive of a massive dwelling-house, with out-buildings, and trees, and hills, and a back-ground of lofty mountains, looming dark, darker, and darkest, into the murky sky. There was such an absorbing obscurity swallowing up every thing. There

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was such a shadowy interest—such a stimulus to curiosity—such a field for imagination in all so vague and undefined. It is the charm of the unknown—the glamor of the *terra incognita*, that attracts us.

It seems like dream-land—like childhood come back. And then there is the cheerful anticipation of exploring the new scenes, by daylight, to-morrow, after breakfast, of which we think now, and of which we shall dream to-night. We are just agreeably chilly, hungry, and tired enough to anticipate thorough enjoyment from the glowing fire, the hot supper, and the soft bed that shortly awaits us; and curious enough to wonder in detail what each will be like.

At the end of a long journey, commend me to an arrival at a country house at dark, where every sort of comfort will be enhanced by the most affectionate welcome. Gently pleasing fancies and feelings, like these, half forgotten childish emotions of wonder and curiosity about small things, possessed my mind, chasing from it completely all dark and weird imaginings awakened by the Phantom House in the Vale of Solitude.

Almost immediately after the carriage stopped, we saw a light glancing behind the closed Venetian

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blinds of the house, and immediately the front door opened, and a lantern emerged and came to meet us, followed by a long, dark shadow that flitted, fantastically, hither and thither, behind it. It was Gullivar, the old gardener, who opened the gate and assisted us to alight. Mary (Mrs. Fairfield) gave us in charge of a colored chambermaid, who conducted us to a pleasant bedroom, fragrant will the smell of dried herbs, and agreeably warmed by a bright and cheerful fire.

Soon as we had bathed and changed our clothes, Mary came and conducted us down to supper in one of those comfortable and agreeable rooms that young and tasteful housekeepers are so fond of perfecting. A coal fire glowed redly through the polished steel bars of a large grate, the bright light of a solar lamp, standing upon the tea-table, flashed down upon an elegant tea-service of chased silver and white china arrayed upon a snowy damask cloth. It was an enviable room indeed.

By the side of the fire, in a spring-bottomed arm-chair, sat a gentleman whose appearance instantly interested me. He was of medium height, of slight, but elegant figure, and his fair, wan complexion, spiritual countenance, and golden locks,

"Did a ghastly contrast bear"

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to the black hue of his mourning dress. This gentleman arose with a languid grace, and came to receive us; and when Mary named me to "Mr. Fairfield," her husband, he welcomed me with easy kindness.

We then took our places at the table. It was impossible, however, not to observe the expression of profound, incurable sorrow upon the countenance of this young man. It was impossible not to wonder how Mary herself could preserve any remnant of cheerfulness by the side of this heart-crushing despair. It seemed too deep, too great to leave him a thought of struggling against it, or concealing it. Yet, habitual politeness, feelings of hospitality or benevolence, made him very kindly attentive to me; and I never saw any thing so sad, so moving to tears, as his smile. Indeed, I was already beginning to be painfully, strongly, interested in this young gentleman—more strongly than I like to be in man, woman, or child, over whose destiny I can exert no control for their happiness. And when I turned from his wan, spiritual countenance, to that of Mary, at the head of the table, I thought that her happy, youthful face, so full of health, intelligence, and cheerful *bonhomie*, must exercise a wholesome,

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of an unseen, influence upon her suffering companion.

An accident that occurred that evening, further excited my wonder and interest. We had left the supper-table, which was cleared away, and gathered around the fire, which had been replenished, and glowed brightly, when a knock at the front-door was heard, and soon after the parlor-door was opened, and an old man stood within it.

He was very tall, very broad-shouldered; but stooping, either with sorrow or infirmity. He was clothed in deep mourning—his left hand leaned heavily on a stout, gold-headed cane, while with his right hand he tremblingly lifted from his venerable head his hat, which he held in his hand, revealing by the action a brow, plowed deep by sorrow or remorse, and hair white as the driven snow. There was an air of deep humiliation, of piteous deprecation, in his whole manner and appearance, most painful to witness in one so aged, and, in every other respect, so venerable. Neither Mary nor Mr. Fairfield arose to receive this visiter nor, by look or gesture showed any sort of respect for him—only Mary looked sadly down at her hands, and Mr. Fairfield said kindly, but gravely,

"How do you do, Mr. Wallraven?"

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"Mr. Wallraven!" thought I, giving a covert, but piercing glance, to the aged and stooping figure standing, hat in hand, so deprecatingly at the door.

"Ferdinand, she is dying at last—come to her, she is dying!" he said.

"Dying!" echoed Mary.

"Thank God!" fervently exclaimed Mr. Fairfield, with the first look of hope I had yet seen on his wan face.

"Yes, dying. Will you come?" repeated the old man, as he trembled over his staff. "Will you come?"

"Assuredly. Mary, love, order the carriage. Dying at last. Thank God!"

Mary had hastily left the room, and soon returned with his cloak and hat.

Fairfield quickly donned them, and, accompanied by the old man, left the house.

After they had gone, Mary Fairfield walked about in a state of half-suppressed excitement such as I had never seen her betray. She seemed to have forgotten me altogether, for which I could not blame her. Presently, suddenly stopping, she asked, "Dear, are you tired?"

Feeling myself really fatigued and somewhat de trop, I answered "Yes."

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"I will attend you to your room," she said, and taking up a candle that she herself had left burning on the side-table, when she came in with Mr. Fairfield's cloak, she preceded me up stairs, and into my room, where we found the fire still burning, and a negro girl waiting.

"You may go, Blanch," said Mrs. Fairfield to the woman, who immediately left the room; and then, "I can unhook your dress, dear," she kindly said to me.

I wished to try her, to see whether she was really concerned at a circumstance, for which she had just thanked God so fervently. I turned suddenly, and squeezing her hand heartily, said,

"Mary, I have half fallen in love with your husband—do you care?"

"Oh! darling, don't jest. He is ill—his constitution has received a severe shock—he is heart-broken."

And now I saw by her countenance that a great deal of her cheerfulness and *bonhommie* in his presence was nothing more than self-control.

A violent knocking at the front-door summoned her in haste from the room. It was about fifteen minutes before she returned. She was bonneted and cloaked for a journey, and she held in her hand a large old letter.

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"They have sent the carriage back for me, dear," she said. "I shall probably be absent all night, but you are at home you know. Blanch will attend to all your orders—and, dear, here is a letter. It is one that Ferdinand wrote to me on the eve of our engagement—he called it his confessions. It is only his explanation of certain dreadful circumstances that troubled me before our marriage, and that trouble you now. I have Ferdinand's consent to leave it with you. Read it. It will tell you all you wish to know. It will engage you during my absence, and, when I return, you will know—the end!"

She kissed me and was gone.

I had been very tired and sleepy; but there was no sleep for me then until I had read the manuscript. I trimmed my fire—drew a candle-stand to my side—and, with my feet upon the fender, opened the manuscript that was to let me into the secret of the "Phantom House."

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## CHAPTER II.

### WOLFGANG WALLRAVEN.

His face is dark, but very quiet;
It seems like looking down the dusky mouth
Of a great cannon.—JOHN STERLING.

Mead him not, though he seem
Dark and still and cold as clay,
He is shadowed by his dream
But 'twill pass away.—BARRY CORNWALL.

I do not know what was the power that attracted me so strongly, so inevitably, so fatally, to Wolfgang Wallraven: whether it was magnetism, sorcery, or destiny—or whether it was the gloom and mystery of his manner and appearance. Certain it is that there was a glamor in his dark and locked-up countenance and in the smouldering fierceness of his hollow eyes that irresistibly drew me on to my fate. He did not seek my acquaintance—he sought the society of no one. On the contrary, he withdrew himself into solitude—into surliness. This was unusual in a schoolboy, and it made him very unpopular. To me, however, his sullen reserve and surly manner had more interest, more fascination, than the openest and blandest demonstrations of social affection from any of the other boys could have. There was evidently something behind and under it. He was not all

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outside. Perhaps he piqued my curiosity, or interested some feeling more profound than mere curiosity. I inquired about him.

"Who is he? Where did he come from?"

"We call him the Prince of Darkness! Oh! he is a haughty fellow. The eldest son and heir of an immensely wealthy Virginian. You can't make any thing of him; let him alone" was the answer.

I turned my eyes on him. He was sitting at his distant desk—a single, solitary desk in the farthest corner of the school-room. His elbow leaned upon his desk—his brow supported upon his left palm—his eyes bent upon the book lying open before him—his dark, rich locks hanging over his fingers.

"Why does the professor give him that distant, single desk, apart from all the other boys? Seems to me that would make him unsocial."

"Why? It is his choice. The young prince is an aristocrat, and does not choose to sit upon a form and mix with other boys. I say you had better let him alone. You can do nothing with him."

I looked at him again and more attentively. There was more suffering than scorn revealed in

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the charming curves of his mouth—a mouth that would have been perfectly beautiful, had not the lips been too closely compressed and the corners too sadly declined. I gazed at him under the influence of a sort of fascination. Yes, there was more sorrow than hauteur darkly written upon that young regal brow. My heart warmed, glowed toward him with a mysterious and irresistible sympathy that compelled me to saunter toward him. (This was in the recess between the morning and afternoon sessions, a period which—with the exception of a few minutes at the dinner table—he always spent at his solitary studying desk.) I sauntered toward him slowly—for I felt in some degree like an intruder—engaged in opposite and contradictory thoughts and feelings. My intellect was seeking to explain the mystery of his solitude and reserve, and to excuse my own intrusion, by this reasoning.

"He is the eldest son and heir of an immensely wealthy Virginia planter. He is of an old, haughty family, and has been accustomed to 'sovereign sway and masterdom' all his life. He is now, however, in a genuine republican school—thank heaven all our schools, academies, and colleges, are republican—and he finds himself in

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a mixed company of sons whose fathers peddled needles and thread about the town, and whose mothers sold apples under the trees, and made fortunes at it; and, with his senseless and anti-republican, Virginian hauteur, he thinks himself above these, and withdraws himself from them Ah! I know these proud, aristocratic Virginians well. My haughty uncle was a Virginian, and emigrated to Louisiana. Upon the part of his school-mates, some are proud as himself, and will not make unwelcome advances; while some are only vain and conceited, ashamed of the newness of their wealth, sore upon that point, secretly honoring old respectability, and fearful of being suspected of courting it, will not seek the acquaintance of this young aristocrat, lest they be so misunderstood. With me, however, it is different. Myself descended from Lord B——, Governor of Colonial Virginia—the possessor of a handsome patrimonial estate in Alabama, when I shall come of age—and the heir apparent of an immense sugar plantation and several hundred resident negroes—I need not fear to approach this young gentleman upon at least an equal feeling."

So I reasoned, as I said, to account for his reserve, and to excuse my own intrusion. But my

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feelings utterly revolted against my thoughts. My head might think what it pleased, but my heart felt certain that pride of place had nothing to do with the surliness of the strange, lonely boy. As I drew near him I felt a rising embarrassment —a difficulty in addressing him to whom I had never yet spoken one word. Suddenly a bright idea was inspired. I had by chance my "Thucydides" in my hand. I approached his lonely desk, opened my book, and said,

"Mr. Wallraven, I have a favor to ask of you. I am in a difficulty about a Greek particle. If you assist me I shall feel under a very great obligation."

Never shall I forget the effect of his picturesque attitude and expression of countenance as I stood by him. His form was turned from me, and towards the corner window against which his desk sat. He was leaning, as I said before, with his elbow on the desk—his head on his hand, the fingers of which were lost amid dark, glossy locks which drooped over his temples and side-face, concealing his face at first from me; but, as I spoke, he quickly, as a startled raven, turned his head, and gave me a quick, piercing glance from his light-gray, intensely bright eye—a glance dilating

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as it gazed, until it blazed like broad sheet lightning upon me. I had always thought his eyes dark until now. His skin was so sallow—his hair, his eyebrows, his sweeping eyelashes, such a jetty resplendent black that dark eyes were taken for granted. When now, however, he raised the deep vails of those long, black, sweeping lashes, light-gray Saxon eyes, of that insufferable white fire, that vivid lightning, at once so fierce and so intense that none but Saxon eyes possess, flashed broadly forth upon me. He did not reply to me at first. I repeated my request. He silently took the book, examined the indicated passage, presently solved the difficulty, and returned the volume to my hand. As I received it and thanked him, I said,

"Mr. Wallraven, we stand in the same class every day. I trust we shall become better acquainted."

He looked at me inquiringly.

"You know my name. I am the son of the late Gov. Fairfield, of Alabama, formerly of Fairfax county, Virginia. You, being of that State, probably know something of that family, or of the B——s, who are connections."

"Yes, I have heard of the Fairfields of Fairfax, and I know the B——s by reputation."

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"Very well! Now you know who I am, I shall be glad to cultivate your acquaintance, hoping that we may be friends," said I, thinking surely that I had made a favorable impression upon the queer, difficult boy.

I was undeceived, however, when, with a dry "Thank you," he dropped the light of his beaming eyes again upon his book. I almost fancied I saw two bright spots on the page, like reflections cast from a sun-glass. There was nothing farther for me to do than to turn and leave him. The school-bell also summoned us at that moment to our afternoon studies.

My attraction to, my affection for that strange boy was rising almost to the height of a passion Never did a lover desire the affections of his sweetheart more than I did the friendship and confidence of my queer outlandish classmate. Never did a lover scheme interviews with his mistress more adroitly than I planned opportunities of conversing with Wolfgang, without seeming to obtrude myself upon him.

I felt as if notwithstanding his extreme youth, his rank, and his pride, he was by some circumstance an object of compassion—but respectful compassion—as if notwithstanding his handsome

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person and fine intellect, he was in reality suffering in heart and brain; and I felt as if, notwithstanding his proud reserve with me, I was his necessary medicine. I felt upon the whole not disappointed with his reception of me. At least the ice of non-intercourse was broken, and I might at any time go to him with a Greek exercise and ask his assistance, which was certain to be lent, and at each interview some little progress was sure to be made. It was true that I really never did need his assistance—my classic attainments being good as his own—as he might have known, had he taken the trouble to think about me at all; but that appeal to his benevolence was the only manner in which it was possible successfully to approach a haughty, reserved, but noble and generous nature, such as I felt his to be—one, too, so determinedly bent upon solitude. What slow progress I made, good heavens! At the end of six months our acquaintance had scarcely progressed beyond occasional conversations, commencing with a Greek root. This was, however, much more ground than any other boy held in his good graces.

At the end of the winter session, a very handsome travelling-carriage, with the Wallraven arms painted on its panels, drawn by a pair of splendid



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black horses, a well-dressed colored coachman, and a smart out-rider, arrived to convey Wolfgang Wallraven away. I thought—nay, I am sure that he betrayed some emotion at parting with me. He went, and I also made hasty preparations to return by stage and steamboat to my distant home in Alabama, where I longed to meet again my lovely and beloved young sister, Regina.

The end of the Easter holidays brought me back to school. There, shortly after my arrival, came Wolfgang Wallraven. He was more gloomy, surly, and solitary, than ever, to all the other boys; of me, however, he was more tolerant. Indeed, in the course of a month or so, our acquaintance began to take the form of intimacy; and as his character began to develop itself to my view, never, I think, did I meet, in life or in books, so strange a being. If I had before been inclined to favor the philosophy of the dual mind, I should then have been in danger of being a convert to that theory. Two natures met, but did not mix or blend in him—two natures as opposite and antagonistical as were his fierce light-gray Saxon eyes and the sweeping jet-black lashes, brows and hair. If any one trait of character stood distinctly out one day, it was certain that

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its very opposite, in all its strength, and even excess of strength, would reveal itself the next.

As his heart gradually, very gradually, unfolded itself to me—or rather to my sympathy, he would occasion me a succession of surprises, and even shocks—pleasing, painful, ecstatic, agonizing, according to the nature and power of new, opposite, and unexpected traits.

He possessed the highest order of talent, but exhibited a very erratic application. If, for one week, he applied himself concentratively to his studies, the next week he would be sure to throw aside his books, and pass into the most *distrait ennuyee*, and despairing mood conceivable, from which no remonstrance, no reproof, of the master professor would arouse him.

As time went on, I still made slow, but certain progress in his affections; little and very precarious ground I held in his confidence; though still in his manner to me, as in every thing else, he was inconsistent, contradictory, incomprehensible and, often astounding If, upon one occasion, he would treat me with unusual warmth and kindness, upon the next he would be sure to freeze up in the most frigid reserve.

He was, indeed, a combination of the most dis-

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cordant elements. As I became intimate with him, I witnessed the most stupendous metamorphoses of character. A sovereign, overmastering haughtiness would alternate with a slavish almost spaniel-like humility; a fierce and wolfish moroseness of temper give place to an almost womanish tenderness. I confidently, logically expected the time when this frozen ice of his reserve would thaw, and drown me with his confidence on one particular occasion I felt sure it was coming.

I went to his room after school, by appointment. I saw the boy who distributed, or rather carried around the letters through the house, coming down the stairs as I was going up, and, pausing only long enough to take the letter for myself from him, I hurried on, intending then to excuse myself to Wolfgang, and retire to my room to read my letter, which I saw was from my sister. But as I approached his room, the sound of suffocating sobs reached me, and, throwing open the door, I went in and found Wolfgang sitting at his writing-table, his arms extended upon it, his head down upon them, abandoned to the utmost agony of sorrow.

I never shed a tear in my life. I saw my beloved mother, my adored father, die, and I suffered the extremity of bereavement and grief, but

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never wept, or felt disposed to weep; therefore it was dreadful to see a tear in a boy's eye, and here was Wolfgang lost, convulsed with anguish; and sobs and sighs, such sobs and sighs as rive the heart in their passage, bursting from his bosom; and copious tears, such tears as scald like molten lead, wherever they drop, falling from his burning eyes. I saw, yet scarcely saw, an open letter on the floor. My heart sank within me, to see him so violently shaken with agony. I went to him, scarcely knowing whether, in his uncertain mood, he would throw himself into my arms, or knock me down. I went to him, and stooping and speaking low, said,

"Wolfgang, my dearest Wolfgang, what is this? Can I in any way comfort or assist you?"

I confess that I was surprised when he turned and fell weeping upon my bosom, in the very collapse of mortal weakness, murmuring,

"Yes—yes; comfort me, if you can. I am weak—weak as a child—weak as an infant. Oh! hold me—comfort me—love me! Love me, if you can."

I set myself to soothe him. I spent some time seeking to console and sustain him, merely by reiterated assurances of sympathy and constant, unfailing friendship. At last I asked,

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"Is there any thing I can do for you?"

"No, nothing! nothing! Only give me your sympathy, or I die! I die! without that support!"

"You have my sympathy, dearest Wolfgang, my adopted brother; but will you not relieve your bosom of its burden of grief; will you not lay it on my breast, that I may help you to bear it?"

"Not now! Not now! I cannot.'

I could only try to strengthen and soothe him by assurances of affection and esteem, until again observing the letter, I said,

"I see you have a letter, Wolfgang. Is it from home? Are your family all well?"

His eyes flew wildly around, and fell upon the letter. He sprang from me, stung to a sudden strength, and seizing it, tore it to atoms, and flung it from the window, exclaiming, furiously, while his gray eyes blazed with intolerable light.

"By heaven, if it were me! if it were me! that which I deserved and had a right to, I would seize and make my own though Satan himself with all his legions stood between!"

"Is this, then, a matter of property, Wolfgang?"

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"Property! Property!" he echoed, with bitter scorn. "Do you suppose that all the money, all the 'property' in the world is worth one such tear of blood as the millions my heart has dropped to-night? No," he added, with contemptuous coolness, "it is not 'property.'"

"Wolfgang," I said, softly, "I have been unjust to fancy for an instant that such a cause could produce such a terrible effect; but what is it, then, my brother?"

"Ah! a matter of heart and soul, of life and immortality, of heaven and hell—leave me! I am distracted, delirious—leave me! You see that I am mad!"

"Can I not serve you in any manner, Wolfgang?"

"No! in no way, but in leaving me alone. Some day, perhaps, I will tell you something—not now."

I reluctantly left the room, my thoughts still continuing absorbed in Wolfgang and dwelling upon his woe.

To have seen him the next morning, no one could believe it possible that he would ever, under any circumstances, have yielded to such a tempest of grief, or abandoned himself to such a mere

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than womanish weakness. Dark, erect, haughty, reserved, he seemed, even to me, quite inaccessible. My affection for him was so great, my wish to do him good so importunate, that, in a few days, I re-essayed to do so.

We had been sauntering through the lawn together. We sat down on a bench under the shade of an oak tree. He fell into silence—into gloom. I thought that now was a favorable opportunity. His hands were folded and his eyes bent in abstraction upon a ring, which he then evidently saw not, on his little finger.

"Of what are you thinking, Wolfgang?" I asked. He started, turned, flashed on me a broad blaze of sheet lightning from his gray eyes, and replied with a sneer,

"I was thinking whether the coral, or the turquoise, made the prettiest seal ring!"

Repelled by his freezing reserve, and almost insulting scorn, I arose in anger and left him. That night, as I was in my room alone, he suddenly entered and throwing his arms around me, strained me to his bosom, almost distractedly, saying,

"Bear with me, Fairfield! I could not sleep with an estrangement between us. Bear with me. I am not always the same. I am an embodied war! I am not always myself!"

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The tender, the childish weakness certainly possessed him now. I thought—I wished I knew which was his proper self, and which was the other one—whether the haughty, regnant scornful spirit, or whether the tender, loving, almost infantile nature, was his own peculiar self. I did not like to be hugged by a boy, either. I never did. There is a physical repulsion about the thing; and I felt the antipathy then, even when the affections of my soul moved so strongly toward him. I returned his embrace in a hurried manner, and then released him, loving him a hundred times more comfortably, after he had withdrawn his arm from around my waist, than I did while they encircled me; but then I possessed a cold, he an ardent temperament. He left me seemingly the happier for our reconciliation. I certainly was. For the next week or so, the prince was in the ascendant, and it was perilous to any one's self-esteem to approach his highness. One day, however, when he seemed unusually gloomy, I took his hand and said,

"Wolfgang, it is useless to try to disguise the fact, or conceal it from one who loves you as well as I do—there is a secret sorrow preying on your breast, eating your heart out—an arrow canker-

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ing in your festering bosom—let the hand of friendship, of brotherly love, draw it out and dress the wound."

I had better left him alone. He turned on me a look of haughty indignation, and said, in a tone of withering scorn.

"'A secret sorrow—a festering wound;' what verbal prettiness! And then the idea—are you perchance, a reader of romances, sir?"

I was nettled, more especially as I had only my own officious impertinence to blame for the affront; but people will take vengeance on any one before their own dear selves—so I answered him angrily.

"Yes! I am an occasional reader of romances, and they teach me, at least, one lesson of discretion, to wit: that 'where there is much mystery there is more guilt.'"

Again the broad sheet lightning of his gray eyes blazed forth consumingly upon my face, and he turned white—white as the ashes of an intensely burning coal. I never saw such a diabolical countenance in all my life before, nor have I since. He started from me, and for days I saw nothing of him; he was ill, or sullen, in his own room. Thus ended my last attempt to win his confidence, but not our friendship, which typhoons of passion seemed to shake only to strengthening.

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The summer session was soon over, and we were going home, not again to return to school, but to enter college. When we were about to take leave of each other, Wolfgang gave way to his impulsive and passionate nature, and embraced me cordially again and again, saying, in excuse for his emotion,

"We part, Fairfield! We shall never meet again, probably, in this world. I am not going to return here. I am going to college."

I was very much affected at his manner. I was surprised, also, at his announcement.

"Going to college? What college are you going to?"

"To Harvard University," he said, embracing me again.

"To Harvard? I was to have entered the University of Virginia; but, Wolfgang, why need we part, since we are Damon and Pythias—come you also to the University of Virginia."

A thunder cloud darkened his brow, and once more the vivid lightning flashed from his eyes.

"No! Impossible! I cannot go there!"

"Cannot?"

"Cannot—you understand!"

"Your father is obstinate in his own choice

of a University, irrespective of your taste and wishes?"

"My father is the soul of kindness and moderation! But, as you say, he prefers that I should enter Harvard."

"Well! my guardian will acquiesce in my wishes in that respect, and as you cannot accompany me to Charlottesville, I must meet you at Harvard. *Au revoir.*"

We took a brotherly leave of each other, and separated to meet, at the opening of the winter term, at the University.

When I reached home, my guardian was alarmed at what he called my consumptive looks, attributed it to too much confinement and too severe study, and insisted upon my remaining at home, visiting my Louisiana relations, or traveling a year before going to the University. My strength, in fact, for the last six months, had suffered some decline, but it had been so gradual that I had scarcely observed it. The change was apparent to those who had seen me in full health a half year previous.

Every one likes upon occasion to find themselves an object of interest, especially every one who like me had sadly missed parental affection and

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solicitude. I had no objection to be petted, coddled and indulged. I was easily persuaded to give up the contemplated seclusion and monotony of the University for twelve months of pleasing travel-variety.

I pass over the incidents of my year of travel, as they have little to do with the subject of my story, with one exception, to wit: I found, on visiting the plantation of my old bachelor uncle in East Feliciana, that he had just taken unto himself a wife—a circumstance that might seriously affect my future in one very important respect, reduce my prospects from those of a millionaire to that of a man of very modest competence, such as my moderate patrimony would afford. However, the discovery of the fact had no effect upon my mind beyond exciting my mirthfulness at the amazing secretiveness of the old gentleman about his marriage, for which I could see no rational cause. Why should he not make himself happy at fifty-five? It was late in the day to be sure, and seemed a great deal queerer in an old bachelor who had lived half a century in single blessedness than it would have looked in a widower even older. The probable loss of the heirship of his wealth gave me no sort of uneasiness. The most

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ordinary capacities of a youth of eighteen are not usually expanded enough to take the extent, strong enough to weigh the specific gravity, or shrewd enough to estimate the value of millions. All they want at present is plenty of pocket money for passing fancies and follies.

My twelve months of freedom expired, and, with invigorated health and renewed ardor for study, I prepared to enter Harvard University.

It was at the opening of the winter term that I reached that place, and there I met again Wolfgang Wallraven, so changed as to be—no, not as to be unrecognizable, for his dark and wild individuality would have revealed itself through all atmospheres.

But could this tall, dignified, self-possessed, and graceful young gentleman be indeed the development of that fierce, morose boy, with his sudden gushes of tenderness, his collapses of utter weakness, and his prostrations of despair? And could this be the work of only a year?

I inquired how long he had been at the University.

He replied, twelve months; adding that he had remained there during the intermission between the two terms.

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"That is it," thought I. "There is something in that home of his that warps, degrades, and stunts him. Ever after going home, he has returned more acrid, morose, fierce, and dangerous, than before. That home! What an interest it has for me! With what a glamour it attracts me! I wish he would invite me to it!"

As time passed, I discovered that the character of Wallraven had undergone a change, or perhaps only an apparent change, scarcely less surprising than that of his person and manners; the wild and wayward temper, the fierce out-breaks of passion, the morose surliness, were gone or governed; the fitful, loving, tender, childlike nature had disappeared, or was suppressed; the almost servile humility with which, without giving me his confidence, he would cast himself upon my sympathy for support—fits of feeblness, or idiocy, that almost fatally betrayed his nobler nature, were utterly sunk, and the haughty, the regnant spirit had risen upon it. There was an air of regal beauty, of commanding grace, in his person and manner, such as I have never since seen in but one other man. The prince had certainly gained the permanent ascendency, and now governed the whole inner kingdom, once in discordant, conflicting and rebellious.

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And yet—yet—there were times when certain gleams from his eyes seemed to warn me that all that was worst and most dangerous in his character was not dead, but sleeping, and gathering gigantic strength in repose; that some day, and under some circumstances, the fiend within him might break out with terrible and destroying fury.

Our mutual esteem and affection constantly increased. He was my confidant at least, and if I were not his, my more matured reason convinced me that it was because the secrets of his bosom, whatever they were, could not be imparted, but he compensated me by the most devoted affection.

At the end of the term, I invited, I besought him to accompany me home; but he declined the visit. I thought that he might possibly return the courtesy by a similar invitation to me, which *en passant* I should certainly have accepted; but he did not. To be brief, we spent a year and a half together at college before either of us knew any thing personally of the family of the other. At the end of every term, I renewed my invitation, which he always declined. At the close of our third term, as a matter now of habit more than of expectation, I invited him to go home with me, and, to my surprise and delight he accepted my invitation, and prepared to accompany me.

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It was while we were on our journey that I told him my sister, Regina, would be home for the holidays, and that, above all things, I was desirous presenting him to her, my "Queen of beauty," my "fair one with golden locks."

## CHAPTER III.

### REGINA FAIRFIELD.

Yet that fair lady's eye methinks hath less
Of deep and still and pensive tenderness
Than might beseem thy sister's—on her brow
Something too much there sits of native scorn,
And her smile kindles with a conscious glow
As from the thought of sovereign beauty born.—Mrs. Hemans.

"The Fair One, with Golden Locks," was the title of a beautiful fairy tale of an enchanted princess, of which my sister Regina used to be very fond; and in gay reference to her penchant for this, and in compliment to her high style of blonde beauty, we gave her this *sobriquet*. We also called her "Queen Blanche," in flattery of her regal grace, and her exceeding, her wonderful fairness. She was, in fact, the very fairest living thing I ever saw. You have seen the wreck! amazing beautiful, even in ruins; but that thing bears no more resemblance to my resplen



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dant Regina, than does the charred skeleton of the lightning-blasted tree to the green and stately mountain pine—heaven receive her! To return.

I had not seen my sister Regina for two years; during which time she had been absent at a "Finishing School." I was therefore curious as anxious to meet her, now that she had returned home permanently. I wished to see what these two years, from sixteen to eighteen, spent at the finishing school, had done for her, who, bating pride, already embodied my idea of womanly perfection.

We reached our journey's end.

It was late in a lovely March day, that we arrived at Willow Hill. We had changed our traveling dresses for drawing-room costume, at the little town of A——, two miles distant, while waiting for the carriage that was to meet us there.

Therefore, upon our arrival, we were ushered at once into my sister's presence, who was already expecting us. Much as I was prepared for improvement, I confess I was surprised, delighted, and somewhat abashed, at the sight of the elegant woman awaiting our approach.

She sat erect, but at ease, in a high-backed armchair, covered with purple velvet, whose dark, rich back-ground threw out her beautiful and

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graceful form in fine relief. She was arrayed in rich white satin, whose glossy and ample folds, descending to her feet, merely permitted the tip of one tiny embroidered slipper to be visible. Her arms and neck, fairer than the satin itself, were bare, except for being delicately shaded by falls of the richest and finest lace, and encircled by pearl bracelets and necklace. Her hair, her "golden locks," were rolled off from her temples in rich and heavy folds *a la Pompadour*, and bound back by oriental pearls, exposing a brow of frosty fairness and sovereign pride. There was a coldness in this statuesque dignity of my sister that prevented me from meeting her with any demonstration of fraternal love, or joy. I think I met her then, as I should have met any other "proud ladie" to whom I might have been introduced, and then I turned, and, presenting my college friend, named,

"Mr. Wallraven, of Virginia."

Regina slightly inclined her graceful head, in acknowledgment of Wallraven's profound and deferential bow, and raising her eyes with a quick, and quickly withdrawn glance, held out her hand to welcome him to Willow Hill, saying, quite graciously,

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"I know the Wallravens, of Hickory Hall, by reputation——"

Here Wolfgang gave a violent start, reeled as under an unexpected and overwhelming blow, made a mighty effort and recovered his self-command, all in a passage of a few seconds, while I looked inquiringly at Regina, and she, with calm surprise, regarded him.

"Will you be seated, Mr. Wallraven, and you Ferdinand?" she said.

We sat down; and Regina, possibly to fill an awkward pause in the conversation, observed,

"Yes—I know the Wallravens of Hickory Hall, by history and report. Wolfgang Wallraven, your American ancestor and namesake, sir, I heard my father say, was a Lutheran refugee, who came to Virginia in the company of his intimate friend, our ancestor Lord B——, and who, as long as his lordship remained governor of Virginia, retained a place in his council. I hope, sir, that we may become better known to each other."

On concluding these gracious words, my princess raised her eyes to those of Wallraven; but they swiftly fell again, while the faintest color dawned on her fair cheek. Wallraven had bowed, and bowed, at the close of every condescending

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sentence; but now, when common civility required him to say something, he was dumb. I came to his relief.

"Miss Fairfield," said I, "is quite *au fait* to the early history, antiquities, and traditions of the Old Dominion, for which she has a great veneration. She is rich in legendary lore, and, though born in Alabama, evidently considers Virginia her mother country, and infinitely prefers it to her native soil."

"For many excellent reasons, without a doubt," said Wallraven, with a bow towards my fair queen, who, with her snowy eyelids drooped till her long golden lashes rested on her delicately roseate cheek, remained silent. Now I came to her succor.

"Regina likes the conservative pride of the Old Dominion—the prevalence of old English feeling—family pride, which mother England herself has outlived, but that still survives in her eldest daughter, Virginia, the child that most resembles her. It is a prejudice—an anti-republican thing, contrary to the spirit of the nineteenth century. You are lagging behind the age, Regina, but you will get over this."

A cold smile chilled the fair face of my sister, who deigned no other reply.

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"This is not so, lady, my friend exaggerates; these are not your sentiments," said Wallraven, in his deep, rich tones, and with a manner in which was strangely blended deprecation and dignity.

She quietly raised those golden eyelashes, to drop them again instantly, as she replied,

"Yes! since I am constrained to confess it; and surely I may do so without offence in the presence of one of so old and pure a stock as the Wallravens, of Hickory Hall, whose family can be traced back to the time of the Saxon Heptarchy. Yes. I do think, that the much ridiculed family pride of Maryland and Virginia, ridiculed, however, only by vulgar wits among the *nouveaux riches* of other states, is, at least, far more worthy of respect than the low pride of new wealth, or appearance of wealth, which is oftentimes no more than superficial finery. The ancient pride of the old families of Maryland and Virginia is assuredly well grounded. Many of them, the Wallravens among the rest," (inclining her head graciously to Wolfgang,) "are assuredly descended from the very flower of the old English aristocracy—many among them dating back to a period long anterior to the Norman Conquest, and numbering in their

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fine some of the most illustrious among the warriors, statesmen, and churchmen of England—noble scions of noble houses, who, for their conservatism, and attachment to the *ancien regime* were driven out by that fanatical spirit of radicalism which, even in the reign of James, began to manifest itself in Great Britain."

"It is true, lady, that the rich valleys and plains of Maryland and Virginia were settled by a very different set of men, actuated by a very opposite set of motives, to those that sent the hardy Puritans to the sterile shores of New England; and that may go far to account for different domestic and social manners, and a different state policy."

"I confess I prefer the ancestral pride of a Virginia planter to the purse pride of a Yankee peddler."

"Those are extreme cases, lady."

"Sir, have you no pride of ancestry? Is it not a matter of self-esteem to you, that your remote progenitor was a Saxon noble instead of being a Saxon serf?"

"No, lady, it is not a matter of pride to me," said Wolfgang in a tone so mournful, that I looked anxiously upon him. "I own, I honor New Eng-

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hand for the perfectly level platform on which all her sons stand with equal rights."

"Let us change the subject," said I.

"With pleasure," said Regina; and, turning to Wolfgang, she asked, "Do you like music, Mr. Wallraven? I have a very rich toned piano forte, in fine tune just now."

Wolfgang instantly declared a passion for music, and, as Regina arose, he offered her his arm, to take her across the room; but she declined the civility with a stately inclination of the head, and, dropping her golden eyelashes, swept on alone in sovereign grace and beauty, and seated herself before the instrument. We followed her. Wolfgang took a station at the back of her chair, to turn the leaves of her music-book. She played and sung several pieces in a very masterly style; but they were all of one character—grand, martial, heroic. At the end of the last piece, the folding doors were thrown open, and a servant appeared, and announced supper. Now rising, and again courteously declining the proffered arm of Wallraven, and moving on alone in her regal pride and purity, she preceded us to the supper-room.

After supper we adjourned to the drawing-room, where we passed the evening in conversation, in

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music, in the examination of new books, prints, such articles of *vertu* as were scattered around, and in projecting plans for the next day's occupation and amusement; no very difficult thing for three persons alone in a country house together, for our guardian was absent.

Soon after this we separated for the night. I accompanied Wallraven to his room.

"Well, Wallraven," said I, as soon as we were alone, "How do you like my sister? Is she 'all my fancy painted her,' or am I a blind enthusiast?"

"Brothers are, of all persons, the least apt to be," dryly replied Wolfgang, who seemed to be threatened with a return of his old boyish surliness.

"And brother's friends are in no danger of becoming so," said I, good humoredly.

Without noticing my last remark, he said, in the slow, oracular tone of a judge balancing the weight of every word.

"Miss Fairfield is beautiful—she is BEAUTY; but, like the mountain snow, she is high, cold, pure, fair, frosty."

"Ah!" said I, "the least lovely of Regina's traits of character has revealed itself this evening,

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Lofty principles, high-toned sense of nonor, perfect truthfulness, large benevolence, generosity, a rich and well cultivated intellect—the treasures of the heart and mind—remain to be discovered!"

"Fairfield! don't fling your sister into my arms so determinately, lest I catch her!" replied Wallraven, with a sarcastic smile that raised my anger to such a pitch as very nearly to make me forget that he was my guest. I replied in a cold and haughty tone—

"Miss Fairfield is not a woman to be thrown or caught, or by any means to suggest such a thought."

"Of course not! It is you who suggest it! Pooh, Fairfield! 'an arrow from Cupid's bow'—to express the thing as you would express it—is ilghtly quivering in my flesh. I can easily pluck it out and cast it from me, if you will allow me to do so. Do not you drive it to my heart, impale me with it—for nothing would ensue but death! Miss Fairfield will probably bestow her hand upon some. 'magnificent son of Acbar' who will be quite worthy of her!"

"I should like to know what you mean by presuming to consider what I have said to you in the light you do. What right have you to do so?"

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"Only the right of knowledge, a fatal gift of insight into the hearts of others, and a dangerous habit of reading aloud what I find written therein,' he replied, with a mournful sarcasm.

I looked at him from head to foot. He was sitting in an easy chair, with his hands joined on his knees, his brigand-looking head bent forward, his piercing eyes fixed on the floor, and his vail of jet-black hair falling forward and shading his darkling countenance. There was so much bitter sorrow in his attitude, expression, and tone, that my displeasure fled.

"Wolfgang!" said I, "what is it that makes me love you so? You say the most exasperating things to me, and then disarm my wrath by a look, a tone?"

"What—is it, perhaps, that you feel I am your friend? Fairfield, my dear fellow, put me in no future plans of your own. The greatest injury I could do myself, the greatest benefit I could confer upon you, is to tell you this. Leave me. Good night!"

We met next morning early. Like most houses in this neighborhood, our house had long piazzas, up stairs and down, running around three sides of the house, with the front room windows, all opening

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on hinges upon them. Therefore, as I opened my chamber door and stepped out upon the piazza, I saw that Wallraven had come out of his room and was promenading there. He turned, smiling, to meet me, took my arm, and said something complimentary of the "beautiful country," now in full spring bloom, though the month was March. After promenading there for some time, enjoying the pure morning air and the extensive prospect, we went below and entered the morning room. It was a long, handsomely-furnished apartment.

Regina was standing at the upper end of the room, attended by two maid-servants, to whom she was giving some direction, and who, as we entered, left her, and passed out by a side door.

Regina came to meet us. She wore a pure white morning dress of some very transparent light tissue, with the skirt made very full, whose gossamer folds floated gracefully with every movement of her queenly form. Her golden hair was rolled back from her snowy forehead, as on the evening before, only, instead of the jeweled bandeau, it was bound by a narrow white ribbon. She held in her hand a few white lilies, whose perfume filled the air. If I could find a word to express the union of the loftiest *hauteur* with the

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clearest purity and the most aerial delicacy, I would use that word to describe Regina, as, wafting fragrance with every motion, she floated on to meet us.

"Do you like lilies, Mr. Wallraven? These are the first the gardener has sent me. They are very fine," she said, separating one from her bunch and offering it to Wolfgang.

"It is your favorite flower, Miss Fairfield."

"Why do you think so?"

"They resemble you—more! they express you!"

Regina dropped those white eyelids again, and, moving on before us, said,

"Come, then, and I will show you how much I like lilies;" and, leaving the room, she floated on, followed by us through the wide hall, and into an elegant little boudoir, whose glass doors opened upon a small but beautiful garden of white lilies, in the centre of which was a clear pond, its borders fringed with white lilies, and its waters reflecting the graceful forms of two white swans that sailed upon its bosom.

"This is the way I like lilies."

"And all things that express elegance, purity, and pride," said Wolfgang, pointing to the swans.

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Yes, the unity and harmony of purity, pride, and elegance, revealed itself in Regina's whole being—her form, features, and complexion—her tastes, habits, and occupations.

We spent the hour before breakfast in the boudoir.

Soon after breakfast another little incident occurred that exhibited my sister's worst trait in rather an unfavorable light. We had returned to the morning room to await the horses, which were ordered to be brought round at ten for us to take a ride over the plantation. We were passing the few moments in conversation, when we saw a handsome barouche drawn by a pair of splendid dappled grays approach, and stop before the house. In an instant I saw Regina's lip curl with that supercilious expression, all but too familiar in her countenance, and she said,

"It is the carriage of Mrs. and the Misses O'Blemmis. Ferdinand, do you remember them?"

"I do not, my dear."

"No, truly. Mr. Wallraven, five years ago a young Irishman by the name of O'Blemmis was engaged as tutor to the only son of the late Colonel Sumner, of Hyde Place. He was a puny

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boy, and died, but the Irishman, who did not drink, married the boy's sister, got the estate, and brought out his mother and half a dozen of his own sisters to help him enjoy it. You shall presently see them all. And by the way, Mr. Wallraven, here is a thing I have seldom seen or heard observed of Irish character, and yet my own observation of this proves the truth of it to my own mind, viz.; whenever a young Irishman comes to America, and is temperate, he makes sooner or later, by perseverance or by *coup-de-main*, a fortune. Here they are."

And the door was thrown open, and the servant announced, "Mrs. O'Blemmis, Miss O'Blemmis, Miss Bridget O'Blemmis;" and those ladies entered.

My sister received them with something more than *hauteur*, which they were certainly too acute to misunderstand, while they were too politic to resent. Wallraven and myself exerted our conversational powers as an atonement for Miss Fairfield's coldness.

I am not going to tire you with a report of the visit that tired me. I mentioned it merely to remark, that after this visit—throughout the ride, and indeed throughout the day—Wallraven's

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manners to Regina were marked by a freezing respect, somewhat similar to that she had shown the O'Blemmises, and that this slightly discomposed the air of elegant ease that ever distinguished Miss Fairfield.

On our return home that evening, Wallraven retired early to his chamber, which he likewise kept during the greater part of the next day, excusing himself upon the plea of having letters to write home. This gave me the first opportunity I had had since my return of being alone with my sister.

We talked of family matters first. She informed me that our uncle's young wife had a fine son, which fact, though it cut us off from an immense fortune, did not afflict us much. Our mercenary years had not come.

Then we talked of Wallraven. Regina acknowledged then, what I am sure she would not have confessed a month later, that she had found Wallraven exceedingly interesting.

"Yes, Ferdinand, the most absorbing person that ever engaged my thoughts! What an air he has! too dark, far too dark and tragic for society; yet one sees that it has its cause in some sternest, hardest truth. His face is so full of expression,

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and so deep in interest. His countenance affects me with a creeping terror such as one feels in looking down at night into a profound abyss. And then his moods are so opposite and contradictory: at one time he has the majestic air of a monarch in full sway of his power; at another, almost that of a slave. And in the most favorable mood he has that air of passive defiance, of proud humility, such as might become a dethroned prince as he bows his royal neck, and lays his uncrowned head upon the block! And in every action there is such earnest such profound truth!"

"He is a strange being, full of discord. Yes, his soul is the 'profound abyss' to which you have likened his expression of countenance, with the night of a deep sorrow darkening it forever!"

"This is really so?"

"Really and truly so; and has been so ever since first I knew him when he was a boy!"

"And the nature of his sorrow?"

"I do not know—cannot even conjecture. I have been his bosom friend for years, and he has never confided it to me. I have exhausted every honorable means of discovering, and cannot find the slightest clue. Of one thing, however, I am positively certain, that guilt has nothing to do

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with his calamity. I feel that in a thousand instincts! And when I say that, I mean neither his guilt, the idea of which would be preposterous, nor that of his parents."

"I believe you! The name of the Wallravens has for centuries been the synonym for an almost chivalric virtue, for an almost romantic standard of honor. Upon account of their absolute purity they have been twitted with 'knight errantry.' This Wolfgang, how he occupies me! Oh! Ferdinand, after all, you have not been a friend or you would have disburdened his heart of this secret before now!"

"That is all you know of the matter, my dear Regina! I have exposed myself to insult more than once in trying to serve him; but never since we met at Harvard."

Reginia did not reply to this, but fell into deep thought, which lasted some moments; then, with a profound but involuntary sigh, she rose and left the room to dress for the evening.

Wallraven joined us in the drawing-room in the evening; and I, with a view of making the next day pass more gaily than this had done, proposed various projects of amusement. Among other plans, I suggested that we should ride to

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town the next morning, and spend the day, and go in the evening to the theatre, to see Booth play Othello. Regina at once and most decisively vetoed this proposition.

"It must necessarily be the most loathsome of all conceivable exhibitions!" she said, "and I wonder how its representation upon any stage should be tolerated for a single hour."

The plan was of course abandoned, and another substituted in its place. Soon after that we separated for the night.

One discovery in physics and metaphysics, I had made in the course of this week, to wit: that love at first sight was a fact, and no poetic fiction. Regina, with all her cold *hauteur*, could not, to save her soul alive, raise her eyes to meet Wolfgang's; and Wallraven's deep bass tones trembled when he spoke to her. I was pleased. Regina's first passion was aristocracy, her second, Old Virginia. Here, then, was a young gentleman that she herself had placed among the oldest and most aristocratic in the state, he himself the most distinguished-looking of his distinguished race, and his large patrimonial estate lying in the richest and most beautiful region of country and in the midst of the most wealthy and aristocratic

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neighborhood in the Old Dominion—among those who had been the friends and relatives of her proud family for centuries past. Could I have chosen a destiny for my fair, proud sister, it would have been this. Could Regina have chosen a fate for herself, it would have been this. And Wallraven—to adore, or not to adore Regina, was now no matter of volition with him!

Let me hurry on.

We remained at Willow Hill six weeks. During this time I could not fail to observe the deep and ever deepening interest with which my friend and my sister regarded each other, nor the anxiety with which each constantly sought to conceal these sentiments from the other. Regina's manner was cold and haughty; Wallraven's, distant and reserved. Yet Wallraven would grow pale as death, if her hand but chanced to touch him; and Regina would tremble if he suddenly came in her sight.

Every week Wallraven's gloom deepened, while Regina's delicate color faded.

I was provoked with both. Why should Regina act the empress and exaggerate the part so abominably; and why should Wallraven be so easily

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flouted off—so backward?—for that appeared to me then to be the position of affairs between them.

As the day of departure drew near, they treated each other with the most frigid coldness.

The last day of our stay at length arrived. We remained at home all day, preparing for our departure. We were to ride to A——, to meet the stage, as it passed at five o'clock the next morning. To effect this, we were to leave the house at four. We were to take leave of Regina over night.

Regina, Wallraven, and myself passed the evening together in the drawing-room. Regina gave us music, but I saw that her touch was inaccurate, and that her voice trembled. It had been arranged that we should retire early, to be in time for the stage, so, at ten o'clock, I gave the signal, and we arose.

I went to Regina, to bid her adieu. She was fearfully, ghastly white, and trembling so that she was compelled to grasp the chair for support. I took her hand: it was cold, and even heavy—pressed it to my lips, and turned away.

Wallraven approached her, to take his leave. He coldly received the hand she coldly extended to him. Both raised their eyes simultaneously—their gaze, full of anguish, full of mutual reproach,

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of mutual inquiry—met—and then—suddenly, in an instant, forgetful of time, place, and circumstances—forgetful of etiquette and propriety—utterly oblivious of my presence and observation—he madly, passionately, caught her, strained her to his bosom, pressing a kiss on her face, while she dropped her head upon his breast, and, bursting into tears, sobbed convulsively, hysterically.

He lifted and bore her to the sofa, laid her there, kneeled by her side, squeezing her hands, stroking her brow and hair, murmuring words of passionate devotion and tenderness!

I was *de trop*—I felt it. I went out, but scarcely had I time to reach my own chamber, before I heard Wolfgang run up the stairs, and, bursting his door open, rush in, and clang it to behind him. I scarcely wondered at any eccentricity of Wallraven's! I set down this piece of conduct to the wildness of joy.

Mentally resolving that our journey must now be deferred a day or two, and that therefore there was no longer a necessity of hastening to bed, I went down into the drawing-room, for the purpose of finding and congratulating my sister. The drawing-room was vacant, she had gone to her chamber. I returned to mine in a well satisfied

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frame of mind; but I wished to see Wallraven again.

Before retiring to bed that night I tapped at his door, and then without waiting for leave, and with the freedom of old friendship, I pushed the door open, and entered the room.

Good heaven! were the old horrid days of the preparatory school come back, and with a vengeance, too! He was sitting bolt upright at the foot of his bed, his hands on his knees, his open gray eyes staring into vacancy, his black locks hanging wildly, elf-like, about his livid and haggard cheeks, his whole appearance cold, stiff, corpse-like. A blood-guilty and unconverted criminal on the eve of his execution—a man in a cataleptic fit—one struck dead by a thunderbolt—might sit so rigid, statue-like, still. My very blood ran cold with a vague horror, as I looked at him.

Terrified for his health, for his life, I sprang toward him, seized his frozen hands, gazed into his stony eyes, placed my hand upon his death-like brow. At that touch a shudder ran all over him, relaxing the rigidity of his form, and he laughed! Such a sardonic, such a maniac, such a devilish laugh, I never heard in my life before, and never

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wish to hear again! It was not loud, but long, low, and bitter. Dreadfully alarmed for his sanity, I exclaimed,

"In the name of heaven, Wallraven, what is the matter? speak! Tell me, I conjure you!"

Again the shudder, again the long, low, and bitter laugh, and then he said,

"Am I not a Wallraven, whose family dates back to a period anterior to the Saxon Heptarchy?"

I gazed at him in a fixed horror. He seemed to know my thoughts, for he replied to them sardonically,

"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness. Ask that snow queen of beauty, your fair, proud sister!"

I was spell-bound by grief and terror. I could not stir. I gazed at him.

> "I am not mad! I would to heaven I were!
> For then 'tis like I should forget myself.
> Oh! if I could, what grief should I forget!
> I am not mad! This hair I tear is mine,"

he declaimed, travestying the lines with sardonic exaggeration, and finishing with a shouting laugh of mockery.

"Oh! heaven! but this is horrible! Wallraven! Wallraven!"

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"I am not mad!" he said, with an omnipotent effort that at length sent apart the curdled blood in his veins, and dispersed the storm clouds that darkened over his spirit.

"Oh! Wolfgang! Wolfgang! you are not mad but you will become so. You will inevitably become so, if this secret suffering of yours recommences and augments so fearfully!" said I.

A spasm convulsed his frame. He dropped his head upon his hands, and his stringy black locks fell forward, vailing both.

"Oh! Wallraven, my heart's dearest brother, is there no way in which I can relieve, can serve you?"

Again the spasm shook him.

"I will not, as in the days of my thoughtless boyhood, ask you for your secret, my soul's dear Wolfgang, but—"

"But I will tell you! I will tell you!" he exclaimed, desperately, "tell you while my good angel has power over me! while *her* escape is possible! tell you the dark and fatal thing that has burned, blighted, and blasted me and mine forever! Listen!"

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE REVELATION.

Well, I listened eagerly, too eagerly. He paused, dropped his head upon his hands, and seemed to be diving into the past.

Deep silence reigned between us, broken only by the supernaturally loud ticking of the chamber clock, hurrying on toward midnight. There he sat upon the foot of the bed, his elbows resting on his knees, his face buried in the palms of his hands, his stringy, jet black locks falling forward, shudder after shudder shaking his frame!

"Poor fellow! he does not know how to begin," thought I, and waited anxiously some time, a feeling of delicacy withholding me from interrupting him, until I found, by the cessation of his shudders and the perfect immobility of his form, that he had fallen into a fit of deep abstraction, and that his thoughts were far, far from me. Then, after some hesitation, I recalled him, by a word spoken in a low, gentle tone,

"Wallraven!"

He started slightly, raised his shaggy black head, and gazed upon me from his light gray eyes

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with the bewildering look of one awakened from a deep sleep, with a dream still overshadowing his spirits.

"Wallraven!" said I again, in a still kinder tone, "you were about to give me——"

"Ha! ha! ha! Oh, thou son of Eve! Never tell me of woman's curiosity! We have not a bit, have we?" laughed he, in the most sarcastic and exasperating manner.

You will wonder, perhaps, at the strange patience I had with that bitter and sardonic youth; but, in truth, I was more pained than angry at his sarcastic and insulting tone, for under all was betrayed the profoundest sorrow, the acutest suffering. I felt the same compassionate toleration for his ill-temper, that we feel for the irritability of any dearly loved sufferer. I replied, gently,

"I did not solicit your confidence, Wolfgang. It was voluntarily proffered on your part; and I tell you now, that unless by so doing I can very materially serve you, I have no wish to pry into your secrets, further than fidelity to my sister's interests under existing circumstances seems to require."

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"To what existing circumstances do you refer?" he asked, quickly.

"To your relations, or implied relations, with Miss Fairfield."

"And what do you suppose them to be?"

"From what I witnessed this evening, I presume that you are engaged," I replied, gazing at him with anxious scrutiny.

"You are wrong—we are not engaged!"

"Not! Is it possible that Regina has rejected you?"

"No; for I have not offered her my hand."

"What! not! Then you intend to do so at the first opportunity."

"No! I have no intention of ever offering myself to Miss Fairfield!"

"Then, by heaven! much as I have forgiven you upon my own account, you shall first give me satisfaction for your unpardonable conduct of this evening, and then swear never to offend Miss Fairfield by coming into her presence again."

"Oh! Ferdinand, my fine fellow, don't flare up. You do not know what you are talking about!"

"I say I will have satisfaction!"

"And so you shall; any and every satisfaction

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you please, and as much of it as you please! Come, I will fight, or apologize, as you will."

"Sir, you are my guest. I beseech you, with all convenient speed that you put yourself in some more practicable relation to the brother of the woman you have offended, that he may——"

"Blow my brains out with a better grace!"

"Call you to a strict account for your proceedings of this evening."

"I have betrayed friendship, trust, hospitality; I merit death! Shoot me where I sit, Ferdinand. I wish you would!"

"You are mad.'

"I kissed her twenty times, Ferdinand, and I never intend to marry her. Come, why don't you shoot me?"

"You are a lunatic—you are not responsible for any word or act," said I, and I was beginning to feel so. If I had been ever so angry with him, my resentment would have vanished, when with one of his sudden changes of mood he dropped his head upon my shoulder, and sobbed and wept like the melting of an avalanche, gasping between whiles, in low, earnest, fervent, interrupted to-

"I love and worship your beautiful and haughty sister! Love her because she is fair, worship her

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because she is proud! Yes! yes! I worship the ground she walks on—for it is holy ground; the pebble her foot spurns—for it is a precious stone! Words! words! breath! air! Look you! People have talked about dying for their beloved! I am doing it! I am doing it!"

Language cannot convey the heart-rending tone in which these words were spoken. He went on,

"Yes, yes! I will account for my 'conduct' of this evening! I had firmly repressed my feelings for six weeks. I thought the danger over, or well nigh over! I went up to her to-night, to bid her adieu, with the stern determination of never, never seeing her again. She held out her hand—looking up to me with her beautiful, bewildering, maddening eyes—eloquent with love, sorrow, reproach, inquiry—and, the great tide of long suppressed emotion rushed in, filling my heart, flooding my brain, bearing down and sweeping away reason, memory, understanding! and I did and said—some maniac things! Come, shoot me, if you please! Yes, I will meet you when and where you please, and bare my bosom to your knife or ball, but never raise my hand against you, my brother, my heart's dear brother! In the name of heaven, then, why don't you speak to me?"

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"Because I have nothing to say. I am mystified and miserable!"

"Yet, oh! do not shut up your heart to me! do not! You love me! do not, therefore, lay up remorse for all your long future life, by harshness to me now—for look you! my life will be short—my death violent! I know it! Speak to me!"

"Alas! Wallraven, what shall I say? You entreat me not to shut up my heart to you. I do not do it. On the contrary, it is you who close yours to me. Yet do not misunderstand me, I do not complain of this, though the passion you have declared for my sister—a passion that I see but too clearly exists, and is reciprocated—makes me extremely anxious, upon account of Regina, when I reflect upon the dark mystery which you confess has blighted your own life, and dread may blight hers!"

He dropped his head upon my shoulder again, and with a huge heart sob gasped,

"I cannot! I cannot! I cannot, by the broken heart of my dead mother! by the smitten brow of my gray-haired father! I cannot reveal to you this blasting mystery! I have tried hard this evening to tell you, and the words 'stick in my throat! But this I will promise you—never to see Miss

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Fairfield again! Ah! you cannot guess the suffering I bring myself, the suffering I withhold from you, on making this promise!"

"I do not demand such a promise; yet—but, Wolfgang, such a demand will depend upon your ception of a question I am about to ask you, which you may answer or not, just as you see fit. This dark secret—is it connected with guilt or with disease?"

"No! no! no! God knows, that whatever may be their other misfortunes, the Wallravens are physically, mentally, and morally sound!"

"Why, so I have always heard of them. They are even proverbial for those qualities. Now, in the name of heaven, give me your hand, my dear Wolfgang! Win Regina if you can! I feel sure that your distress, whatever it may be, is morbid. Nonsense! Love and friendship will cure you. What! Young, healthy, handsome, moral, intelligent, accomplished, wealthy, and of high rank, loving and beloved, with no one to cross your wishes—what should trouble you? I begin to think you are a mere hypochondriac"—and so I really did.

You will pronounce this hasty confidence very wrong—so it doubtless was; but I loved Wolfgang

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Wallraven with more than a brother's love; I was by nature trusting to a fault; I was inexperienced; and I have expiated the error by suffering in every vein of my heart and brain!

The next morning we set out on our return to the North, Wolfgang insisting upon our going, as previously arranged. I had stopped at Regina's door, to see if possibly she was up, but all was dark and silent in her room. We left without seeing her again.

We reached the University some time after the commencement of the term, and had to apply ourselves with double vigor and perseverance to our studies, in order to make up for lost time.

From the day of our re-entrance into college, Wallraven was everything that the most exacting and fastidious friend could desire him to be—calm, self-possessed, dignified, gracious—though seldom, perhaps never, cheerful. He never voluntarily mentioned Regina to me; and if ever I would name her to him, he would govern a strongly rising emotion, and say, "As Milton toiled for fame, as Napoleon toiled for dominion, so I toil for Regina! One day, when wealth and fame and power and dominion—such dominion as God gives genius—are mine, I may win her! When I have

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power to place her in the highest rank of society, in the most civilized city in a yet uncivilized world, then I will ask her to share her fate with mine—not till then!" or something like it. He did toil. He gained the highest approbation, the honor of the professors. The most brilliant auguries were drawn for his future. I shared them. I felt his power. I felt that if he could once conquer a peace in his own bosom, he might become just what he pleased.

As for Regina, she never mentioned him in any of her letters to me; but I knew too well that he was not forgotten, by the tone of sadness that pervaded all her expressed thoughts and feelings.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INSIDE OF THE OLD HALL.

"A lonesome lodge,
That stands so low in lonely glen,
The grim, tall windowes, dim and darke,
Are hung with Ivy brier and Yewe;
No shimmering sun here ever shone,
No halesome breeze here ever blewe,
No child, no matron, may you spye,
No cheerful host."—PERCY'S RELIQUES.

THE winter vacation approached, and I once more pressed Wallraven to return home with me and spend Christmas. He declined the invitation,

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and, to my surprise and delight, invited me to accompany him to his own home in Virginia. I accepted his proffered hospitality with much pleasure, and writing to Regina not to expect me there during the holidays, I prepared to accompany Wolfgang to Hickory Hall.

I cannot tell you with what interest, with what highly excited curiosity, I set out upon this journey to the interior of Virginia. I do not know what I expected to find; I only know that an old, very old and unknown country house always possessed a mystic charm for me; and here was one that, with its own peculiar mystery, took hold of both affection and imagination.

We journeyed by stage until we reached Washington city.

There, at the Indian Queen Hotel, we met Mr. Wallraven's handsome traveling carriage, with the splendid black horses, the well-dressed coachman, and mounted out-rider.

Early upon the morning succeeding our arrival at Washington city, we set out for the Valley of Virginia. You know how wild and beautiful how savage and sublime the scenery becomes, as you approach the Blue Ridge. We traveled by

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easy stages, and were two days in reaching the grand pass of the Bear's Walk.

It was the evening of the second day when we began slowly to ascend the mountain.

It was nearly pitch dark. Floating masses of black, heavy, and lowering clouds obscured every ray, even of starlight. It was intensely, biting cold. Down from our right opened, as it seemed, to the very centre of the earth, a vast profound abyss of blackness, cloud, and shadow, from the depths of which gleamed fitfully a lurid stream of red light, flitting hither and thither as we moved, like a jack-o'-lantern, amid the blackness of that ocean of shadows.

"That is our destination, that is my home—Hickory Hall—" said Wallraven, pointing to the elfish light.

"That! How in the name of Providence are we to get down there?" inquired I, in real anxiety.

"The road is certainly very dangerous on such a night as this, and I am about to order the lamps lighted." This command he accordingly gave, and the carriage was stopped, and the lamps were lighted.

We started again, and, soon turning sharply to the right, began to descend into the vale: but be-

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fore we had proceeded many yards, the coachman drew up the horses, and turning round, said that the lamps only made the matter worse; that the lights and shadows on the downward and precipitous road were deceptive and dangerous; and finally gave it as his opinion, that we had better alight and walk down, which we accordingly did, or, rather, we climbed down—while the coachman led his horses slowly and carefully behind us. An hour's hard toil brought us to the foot of the mountain, where we resumed our seats in the carriage, and were driven swiftly toward the lurid light that marked the site of Hickory Hall. The carriage passed through an arched and broken gateway, the light fitfully falling upon the fragments of the old and glistening red sandstone that had once formed the pillars of the gate. We stopped immediately before the broad old-fashioned hall door, to which a flight of broad oak stairs and a portico led.

An old white-headed negro, with a candle in his hand, came out and met us at the door, and saluting Wallraven as "Master Wolfgang," showed us into—

One of those wainscoted halls so common to the old mansion houses throughout the old neighbor-

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hoods of Virginia. The dark and polished oak floor was uncarpeted, and the vast room was lighted up, as with a conflagration, by an immense fire of large and blazing hickory logs that roared and crackled in the huge chimney. Grim portraits frowned from the dark, oak-paneled walls, and the battle of Yorktown raged furiously above the chimney piece. Four or five richly carved high-back chairs drew themselves haughtily up, repelling all advances. Nothing looked hearty and cheerful but the great and glowing fire that warmed and lighted the room so delightfully, and blazed and crackled so gayly, as to make amends for all.

"Will you go to your room now, or wait till after supper, Fairfield? John, how soon will supper be ready?" asked Wolfgang of me, and of the negro, in a breath.

"In half an hour, sir," replied the old man who had conducted us in.

"In half an hour; well, Fairfield, what say you? Will you go to your own room? or—John?"

"Sir!"

"What chamber have you got ready for Mr. Fairfield!"

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"Mrs. Wallraven's room, sir."

"The deuce!"

"Yes, sir. You wrote us that the young gentleman was delicate, and that his room must be comfortable. Now, sir, Mrs. Wallraven's room is the only one as doesn't leak when it rains, and it is coming on to rain, sir."

"Very well. Is there a fire kindled there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are Mr. Fairfield's trunks carried up?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Fairfield, will you go now to your room to change your dress, or will you remain here until after supper?"

"I will remain here, Wallraven; but I am sadly afraid, my dear fellow, that I have turned some one, some lady, out of her room—that would be dreadful!"

"Some lady! Humph! romancing again. What lady do you fancy you have turned out of her room?"

"Mrs. Wallraven."

"Ah, Mrs. Wallraven, certainly. It was Mrs. Wallraven's chamber; but she was the last occupant and she has not used it for some time!

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Be easy, my dear fellow, the room is yours—only I hope it really don't leak."

"John!"

"Sir."

"Where is my father?

"In his library, sir."

"Let him know that we have arrived. He expected us to-night."

"Yes, sir."

"Go, then."

The old servant left the room, and soon after the door opened, and—

A tall and venerable old gentleman, clothed in deep mourning, and with a head of hair as white as the driven snow, appeared. Wolfgang sprang, bounded to meet him. The old man opened his arms, and silently and sadly folded his son to his bosom. Then he came to me, and with a singular blending of sweetness, sadness, and dignity, welcomed me to his house. He had scarcely done so, when the door once more opened, and—

I raised my eyes to see one of the most majestic and beautiful women I ever beheld advancing within it. She, like the old gentleman, was dressed in deep mourning, and her fine black hair, glittering in a thousand jetty ripples, was turned

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in large Madonna loops down her cheeks, carried back, and woven in a large knot behind. She was too tall and too dark for my ideal of feminine beauty, but then her form was so finely rounded, her face so graciously, richly beautiful—a Cleopatra she was, such as we picture the Egyptian Queen for whom a world was lost!

"My daughter, Miss Wallraven," said the old gentleman, as the lady came in; and then, "Constantia, my child, this is Mr. Fairfield, with whom Wolfgang, by his letters, has already made us so well acquainted. Welcome him to Hickory Hall."

Miss Wallraven offered me the most beautiful dark hand I ever saw, and looked at me with a pair of large, dark, humid eyes, whose languid lustre haunted me many a day and night thereafter, and in a voice whose tones were at once very low, and very full, round, and melodious, cordially bade me welcome.

In a few moments after this supper was announced, and we went to the table. Such a supper! It was one, such as only Virginia housekeepers know how to set out.

Yes, the supper was perfect—not so the company. Wolfgang was sombre; the old gentle-

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man's manner grave and courteous; Miss Wallraven's dignified and gracious; all very admirable, but not at all enlivening.

I felt an enthusiastic admiration of Miss Wallraven; but it was precisely the sort of admiration one would feel at suddenly beholding some marvelous masterpiece of nature or of art—some richly, gorgeously beautiful creation, whose very existence seemed a wonder. "Queen of Egypt," "Cleopatra," "Night," "Starlight," all things darkly splendid, grandly beautiful, seemed parallels for her. Gazing on her, I caught myself repeating these lines of Byron, and thinking how strikingly they portrayed her.

"She walks in beauty, like the night,
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes."

After supper we returned to the old wainscoted hall; more logs were thrown on the blazing fire, and we gathered around it. The evening passed pleasantly, with conversation, music, &c. At eleven o'clock we separated for the night, and Wolfgang himself attended me to my room. It was in the second story. In keeping with all in the house, it was an old-fashioned apartment, the two principal features being a large tent bedstead

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hung with dark-green damask, and a wide fireplace, in which burned and glowed that inevitable country blessing, a good wood fire.

"I will retort your question. 'How do you like my sister,' Fairfield?"

"Yes! that was friendly—was it not? You never mentioned your sister to me before; never prepared a poor fellow for the danger that lay before him—a regular ambuscade!"

I repented this flippant speech in a moment, when I saw how seriously Wolfgang took it.

"I am no egotist; I never was. I do not talk of myself and my family; I never did," he replied.

"Pooh! You mean to accuse me of egotism, because I have talked to you so much about my sister. Well! It is true I thought Regina the very *chef d'œuvre* of nature until I saw Miss Wallraven! She has astonished me! She has taken away my breath with admiration! with wonder! Can beauty like that exist anywhere else than in the ideal world of poets and artists? Can such rich beauty really live and move, and have its being in the actual world? be seen with sight and touch?"

Wallraven looked really offended.

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"Come!" said he, "Constantia never set up for good looks that ever I heard; most certainly she has no pretensions to beauty; and, as to rivaling Miss Fairfield in that respect—pshaw! Fairfield. Constantia is no subject for jest, let me tell you! When I asked you how you liked my sister, I meant how did you like her as a pretty good girl, altogether?"

"And I tell you that she takes my breath away with her unparalleled, her wonderful beauty!"

"I marvel if you are crazy, or sarcastic!"

"I am in earnest—deeply in earnest——"

"When you say Constantia is good-looking?"

"When I say she is magnificently beautiful!"

"Heaven mend your taste! Why, she is too tall, too large, too dark!"

"So was that wonderous Queen of Egypt, for whom the demi-god, Marc Antony, lost the world!"

"Hum! Go to bed, Fairfield."

"She is the only Cleopatra I ever saw, or dreamed of?"

"You have been reading poetry. Good night, Fairfield! Daylight, breakfast, and a fox-hunt tomorrow, will set you right! Get to sleep soon as you can."

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He left me, evidently sincere in his natural brotherly blindness to his sister's superb style of beauty.

I was in fact dreadfully wearied out, and, as soon as he had left me, I threw off my clothes, blew out the candle, and jumped into bed.

I could not sleep.

The blazing hickory fire in the fire-place illuminated the whole room with a dazzling brilliancy that would have left sleep out of the question, even if a female face, beautiful as a houri, had not gazed mournfully at me from the wall opposite the blazing fire. It was Constantia's dark face, with less of dignity and more of love, more of sorrow, more of religion, in its expression. "The eyes were shadowy, full of thought and prayer." It was a Madonna countenance, and the longer I looked at it, the more I adored it. Yes! it was not a face to be passed over with mere admiration, however ardent that admiration might be—it was a face to be adored; and as I gazed upon its heavenly loveliness, something like religious devotion moved in my bosom, and almost impelled me to kneel before that image of divine beauty, love, and sorrow. I fell asleep, at last, with my imagination full of that celestial countenance and my soul full of prayer.

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Suddenly I awoke with a start! It seemed to me that I had been aroused from slumber as by the shock of a galvanic battery. I trembled even after I was awake as with a vague terror, of which I should have felt ashamed had I not ascribed it to a hot supper and the nightmare. I looked around the room and upon the beautiful picture. The fire was burning down low, and the flame flashed up and down upon the opposite portrait, giving a convulsive emotion to the features, as of sobbing. I looked at the sorrowful sobbing face with a feeling of deep pity, as though it had been the living sufferer that it seemed. There was such an indescribable look of life, love, anguish, on the beautiful features, I felt a dreamy, mysterious, but intense desire to wipe away the tears from that pictured face. It was a good while before I could get to sleep. That beautiful countenance, silently convulsed in the fire-light, fascinated me. If I determinedly closed my eyes, they would fly open again, and fix upon the pictured sufferer. Nay, even when my eyes were closed, the lovely face still present to my mind, and it seemed to me to be heartless to go to sleep with such an image of beauty, love, and sorrow before me. I was too

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imaginative. Well! the time, place, and circumstances, made me so.

At last I fell asleep indeed; but through my dreams still slowly moved the image on the wall—beautiful, good, loving, suffering, as I felt her to have been; and with her moved another being—a perfect spectre, that might have been the consort of Death on the Pale Horse—an old, decrepid, livid hag, with a malign countenance and gibbering laugh, whose look chilled and whose touch froze my blood with horror. Suddenly a noise, a fall, a smothered cry, awoke me, and, starting up in my bed, I saw in the red firelight, between the chimney and the side of my bed, the very hag of my dream, livid! malignant! gibbering! struggling violently against Wolfgang Wallraven, who, himself an embodied typhon, with a wild, angry blaze in his light-gray eyes, held her.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

Unobserved by him, I, after the first involuntary start, had fallen back upon my pillow.

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The conflict was too unequal to last above a minute. It was a deadly, silent struggle. He evidently wished to secure without hurting her, or making the least noise. He quickly succeeded in mastering and bearing her out of the room.

Soon he came softly back. I was lying still; he evidently inferred that I was asleep; for, after throwing a quick, penetrating glance at me, and looking hurried around the chamber, he silently retired, cautiously closing the door after him.

You may judge that I slept no more that night. I scarcely knew with certainty at what point to separate my sinister dream from the mysterious reality; and doubts, and even anxious fears agitated me. Who was that malign old hag? How came she in the dead hours of the night into my sleeping-room? What motive brought her there? How had Wolfgang known of her visit? Or, which had come first, and which had followed the other? Or, possibly, had they come together, and for what purpose? What meant that deadly struggle? What meant that look of agonized dread and terrible purpose upon the ghastly face of Wolfgang. The look of unutterable hatred and determined malignity upon the fiendish features of the beldame?

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I am no coward, but I say that I turned ice cold with horror—not so much at what might have happened to either of the mortal foes, as at the passion silently raging in the bosoms of both.

All was dark and still in my room now. The lurid dull red glow of the smouldering coals on the hearth revealed nothing. Even the image on the wall was invisible in the deepening shadows of that darkest hour that precedes the dawn of day. I lay in the misery of an energetic acutely anxious mind, fretting itself against the forced inactivity of the body.

At length the unknown sounds that usher in the earliest dawn of morning began to be heard.

I arose, drew on my dressing-gown, and taking some dry oak logs from a wood pile near the fireplace, threw them upon the smouldering coals, which soon kindled them into a cheerful and genial blaze. As, however, the room was yet too dusky, I went to the windows to open the shutters. I had some difficulty in hoisting the windows and in pushing open the shutters, for they were blockaded with snow and ice. When I did so, however, the frozen snow fell rattling down to the ground, and the sudden dazzling sunbeams flashing in, nearly blinded me with light.



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When I could look out, however, I saw that the dark and heavy clouds of the preceding day had not fallen in a deluge of rain as had been predicted, but during the still and silent hours of the night had noiselessly descended in one of those tremendous falls of snow that furnish paragraphs for the marvelous department of the newspapers of the day, and make data in the history of a lifetime. All around stretched fields of frozen snow, the great depth of which might be partly guessed at by the tops of high gate-posts sticking a few inches above the surface, and marking the site of a buried line of fence—fields of crusted and sparkling snow, which flashed off in undulating radiance to the circle of mountains that shut in this white, cup-shaped dell, and whose icy peaks scintillated against the cold, blue horizon. This vast snow-cup, snow-pit, snow-dell—flashing, sparkling, scintillating, dazzling, glanced brighter in the reflected rays of the morning sun than the winter sky above.

It was certain that we were immured in this snow-glen, within the confines of these closely circling and ice-cumbered mountains, for an indefinite number of days. There would be no fox-hunting that day, or that week. That was

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evident; that I did not regret. Not life without, but life within, the homestead, absorbed my thoughts, and I turned from the flashing fields of snow and glancing peaks of ice, to look upon the beautiful portrait on the wall, that had so powerfully attracted me during the night. I wished to examine it, to test its powers of fascination by sober daylight. I turned and looked for it.

It was gone!

I gazed, doubting my own eyes! It was certainly gone! No sign of a picture ever having been there—no pin, screw, or nail, or even hole in the wall, was to be seen! I looked all around in an almost ludicrous state of bewilderment.

I half suspected the whole train of sinister events of the past night to be merely the phantasmagoria of a midnight dream, or the creation of a morbidly excited imagination, and I began to make my simple morning toilet.

I had not got half through, when a rap at the chamber door arrested my attention, and to my "Come in!" entered old John—who seemed to be factotum to the household—with hot water, towels, and offers of service. I gratefully accepted the hot water and the towels, and as gratefully declined his assistance at my dressing-table.

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He then informed me that breakfast would be on the table in half an hour, and left the room.

"A quarter of an hour afterward, having given the last and most graceful wave to my temple locks, in honor of my superb Queen of Egypt, I descended to the hall.

As I entered the old wainscoted apartment—heated, as upon the previous evening, by an immense fire of hickory wood—I saw Mr. Wallraven, Wolfgang, and old John, standing on the broad hearth in deep and earnest conversation. "Secured"—"keep her own room"—were the broken words that fell upon my ear as I came in, when the trio suddenly separated at my approach, and Wolfgang came forward to meet me.

He was dreadfully pale and haggard. He appeared really very ill. After glancing at me furtively and keenly, he spoke to me very affectionately, saying something about regretting that the inclemency of the weather should oblige us to postpone our hunt.

I told him there was no fear but what we should be able to amuse ourselves for the few days during which the snow would confine us to the vale.

"As how, my dear Fairfield—trapping snow

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birds and cracking hickory nuts; for that appears to be the only resource."

"Books, music, conversation, tales of olden times. Miss Wallraven——"

"Ah!" began Wolfgang; but before he could proceed with his threatened sarcasm, Old John appeared at the door, and announced breakfast.

I followed Wolfgang into the next room; and there we found a good fire, and a fine Virginia breakfast.

Mr. Wallraven was there, and, beside the servants, no one else. He invited us to be seated at the table, and we took our places. I was helped to coffee, buckwheat cakes, broiled partridge; but my attention was divided between the savory viands before me, and the door at my right hand, through which I hoped and expected every instant to see my "wondrous Queen of Egypt" enter. I wished so much to see her by daylight. At length I could bear the suspense no longer; and, turning to Mr. Wallraven, I asked,

"Are we not to have the happiness of Miss Wallraven's presence at breakfast, this morning?"

I was not answered immediately. I saw that both the old gentleman and Wolfgang changed

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color, and exchanged glances, as Wolfgang replied in a low tone of voice,

"My sister left home this morning, for an absence of several weeks."

I bowed, as in politeness bound; but how Miss Wallraven could have left home, through the avalanches and icebergs that blockaded us that morning, was a mystery so me.

Without seeming to make any effort, both Mr. Wallraven and Wolfgang certainly exerted themselves to entertain me.

Thanks to their successful endeavors, the next week did not pass heavily, although we were confined almost entirely to the house and near grounds. A well-stored library; various musical instruments; backgammon, chess, cards, billiards; conversations with the old gentleman, who possessed a rich and highly-cultivated mind, a profound tone of thought, exalted sentiments, and a brilliant style of conversing; spars with the wilful but fascinating Wolfgang—filled up the hours of the short days.

My growing friendship for the old gentleman deepened almost into love; my esteem for him at least amounted to veneration! So patriarchal, so reverend, seemed his tall figure, his snow-white

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hair, and his clerical black suit—so full of Christian love and benediction seemed his serious smile and his sweet, grave tones. My reverence for the venerable father greatly augmented my respect, if it could not increase my affection, for the son; but —the mystery! the mystery! What was it? My mind sometimes naturally connected the midnight apparition of Wolfgang and the malign hag in the bed-chamber with the terrible secret of the family; and at other times I entertained a rational doubt as to whether the dread apparition were a dream or a reality. Since that first night, my sleep had been undisturbed.

The end of that week brought Christmas Eve, and also a considerable moderation of the cold and thaw of the snow, though the condition of the ground still precluded the possibility of a pleasant hunt.

Christmas day, we had a small party of gentlemen to dinner, and the long-talked of hunt was appointed for the next week. After dinner, and when these men were about to take their leave, we were all invited to return the visits upon any day that we should fix, and I, as a stranger, was pressed to do so. I observed that Mr. Wallraven, with a strange blending of humility and pride,

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courteously declined these invitations. These gentlemen, I heard long afterward, were a company formed for some enterprise, and that they were trying to negotiate the loan of a very large sum of money from Mr. Wallraven—an arrangement they finally succeeded in completing, much to their satisfaction, however little it might have been to Mr. Wallraven's interest.

Sunday after Christmas, Mr. Wallraven and myself attended Divine service at the Episcopal church of St. Stephens.

Wolfgang remained at home.

After the sermon, Mr. Wallraven lingered until all the congregation had left the church, and then came out of his pew to meet the young minister, who was coming down the aisle to speak to him. They met as intimate friends who had a great respect for each other. Mr. Wallraven introduced him as the Rev. Mr. Davenport, and then they entered into a conversation for a few minutes. At parting, Mr. Wallraven pressed the minister to come over and dine with him the next day—an invitation that he accepted.

The next day, Mr. Davenport and his wife—who by-the-way was not included in the invitation extended to her husband, came over to Hickory

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Hall. Mr. Wallraven received the clergyman with grave cordiality, and his amiable wife with scarcely concealed surprise and emotion. When we were once seated around the great fire in the old wainscoted hall, Mr. Davenport inquired with much interest for "Constance."

"My daughter is from home for a few weeks," replied the old gentleman.

Mr. Davenport expressed some regret at not being able to see her, and the conversation dropped, or rather changed. This day passed very pleasantly. The minister and Mr. Wallraven had a game of chess.

Mrs. Davenport—who was an amiable, intelligent, and interesting little lady—Wolfgang, and myself, played and sang trios, or two of us duets. We dined early; and early in the afternoon our visitors departed, having very reluctantly drawn from Mr. Wallraven a promise to dine with them on New Year's Eve.

The next day, being Tuesday, was the day of our great hunt. Mr. Davenport of course did not join in it, from that irrational and very deleterious custom which debars ministers of the gospel from amusements considered lawful and beneficial to the lay members of their congregation—thus separat-

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ing religion from innocent, cheerful, and healthful pleasure, greatly to the disparagement of the former.

The party of gentlemen assembled early in the morning, and the neighing and prancing of the hunters, and the cries of the hounds, made a gay and enlivening scene. We set out very early, and had a highly exciting hunt, and a rather fatiguing day. It was late in the afternoon before the brush was taken.

Wolfgang Wallraven took it.

We returned to a sumptuous dinner at Hickory Hall. After the dessert, the guests sat long over the wine, and it was late in the night before they separated and left the house.

We were later than usual at assembling to breakfast the next morning. After breakfast, we were reminded by a note from Mr. Davenport of our promise to dine at St. Stephens' parsonage upon some day of the current week, and invited for the next day.

Mr. Wallraven, after some considerable hesitation and evident reluctance, wrote to accept the invitation.

Accordingly the next morning we set out for the parsonage, distant some nine miles, and where

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we arrived about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. We found the excellent clergyman and his wife friendly and hospitable as ever, but not so lively—struggling in fact to keep up a cheerfulness, which was evidently maintained by great effort.

The conversation, after some variety, turned upon church affairs, in the course of which Mr. Davenport inadvertently let escape him a hint that his congregation, especially his vestry, were much dissatisfied with him, and that his stay among them was now unpleasant as well as doubtful.

Then old Mr. Wallraven arose, and laying his hand solemnly and affectionately upon the shoulder of the young clergyman, said, in a low voice,

"I have long feared this, my excellent young friend! I know too well their ground of objection! Come with me. I would talk with thee apart!" and, excusing himself, Mr. Davenport arose, and they walked slowly away in earnest conversation together.

I caught these words—"My dear, disinterested young friend, you must not injure yourself by your indiscreet attachment to me. Already one dear, Christian friend has fallen a victim to his love for me and mine. This must not go on. Let me alone, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that let him

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reap." Thirty years of sufferance, that has whitened my hair like snow at fifty, has nevertheless accustomed me to my sorrow, and strengthened me to bear it? You must—"

The remainder of the speech died away, but at the distant bay window I still saw them in debate, the patriarchal old man, earnest, solemn, impressive; the tones and gestures of the young clergyman, energetic, denunciatory. I think that Mr. Wallraven convinced, at least, I know he silenced the minister; for, on returning to the fire, the old gentleman appeared satisfied, while Mr. Davenport seemed melancholy, and even, perhaps, remorseful.

When we left in the evening, no invitations were given on either side, and the parting itself was grave and sad.

Storm clouds were again mustering in the northwest, and we had a very brisk ride through the cold and darkening twilight, in order to escape, if possible, the storm of wind, snow, and sleet, that, nevertheless, when we were within half a mile of Hickory Hall, broke out upon us in boisterous fury. We reached the homestead at last, where the severity of the weather confined us for a week. After it moderated, we had an occasional guest at

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dinner, but went out visiting no more during our short stay.

Our time was passed, however, more agreeably than before. We were blessed with one of those clear, mild, and dry spells of weather, which sometimes visits us even in the dead of winter. We passed the remainder of our time—in the mornings, in sporting expeditions upon the mountains and in the forests from which we would return laden with game; in exploring expeditions among the wild and picturesque or awful and majestic scenery of the Blue Ridge, or in sails upon the Shenandoah; and in the evenings in games of various kinds, in music, books, or conversation.

We had another great hunt upon the last day of our stay, and the next morning we left Hickory Hall for the North.

I need not say that during my stay, throughout all the external circumstances of my visit, my thoughts and feelings were intensely interested in the sinister mystery that enveloped the unfortunate Wallravens, which nothing tended to elucidate, while every thing helped to deepen.

It is not to be supposed that all I had read and heard at Hickory Hall had not greatly increased my anxiety upon my sister's account. Another

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cause for uneasiness I had also. During my residence at Hickory Hill—and in fact from the time of my having written to Regina of my proposed visit to Virginia—I had not once heard from her. Notwithstanding I had written two or three letters I had received no answer. I fancied this proceeded from a feeling of resentment on her part, upon account of my visit; but I also feared that she might be ill or unhappy.

Upon reaching the University, however, I found one letter from her, bearing a recent date, awaiting me. She was well, had got all my letters, hoped I had enjoyed my visit to Virginia, coldly regretted that she had not had the pleasure of my society and that of my friend, Mr. Wallraven, at Christmas, but hoped to be compensated at the end of the ensuing term. That was the first time she had ever mentioned Wolfgang in any of her letters to me. I felt that she did so now only for the purpose of drawing me out. I felt it my duty to enlighten her as much as I was able, which you may judge was not much. I sat down and wrote her a long, long letter, filling six foolscap pages, and giving her a detailed account of all that had happened since my leave-taking of her—I mean

*lly* all events in which Wolfgang was con-

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cerned. I folded and sealed this letter, and after leaving it in my desk all night, took it out, and—consigned it to the flames! By a change of opinion and feeling, irrational and erratic as any of Wolfgang's own, it appeared to me the work of a spy, to go into his domestic circle and expose all that I saw there to the worst construction, and that, too, to the woman whom he loved and esteemed above all others in the world. At least I determined to think again before I did this, and resolved never to do it unless circumstances strictly demanded it—unless, in fact, he should renew his suit to my sister, in the way of which I purposed to throw every sort of obstruction. I formed a resolution never again to go to Hickory Hall, and never again to invite Wallraven to Willow Hill. Do not suppose that I could determine upon this course without deep grief, for I dearly loved Wolfgang; and this very resolution, growing out of a sense of duty as it did, now served to deepen, as well as sadden, my affection for the strange fellow.

The current term was to be our last at the University. During the whole of this term Wallraven applied himself to study with unparalleled industry. It was predicted that he would

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take a very high degree; and when the end of the term came, this prediction was fulfilled in his highest success. He received marks of esteem from the most distinguished of the professors, and the warm congratulations of his companions. This eminent success had astonished even those who predicted great things for him, and, I think, surprised Wallraven himself, and—with honor of the distinguished, and the sympathy of the warm-hearted among his associates—combined to warm his stiff, cold, reserved nature.

Never had I seen him so nearly happy. He invited me to go with him to Hickory Hall, where he said he should spend some months previous to going abroad. I declined. Then he gave me every opportunity of returning the civility, which I omitted to do. I do not know how long my resolution would have held out; for his eminent success, the honor paid him, and, more than all, his own happy elated mood, were conspiring to bring about a hopeful change in my sentiments—had not a circumstance occurred to put all choice out of the question—an event that decided for time, perhaps for all eternity, the fate of my ill-starred sister, and overwhelmed my life with sorrow. I had not heard from Regina for a month,

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and was beginning to feel very uneasy. I grew anxious for the day when I should set out on my journey homeward, to meet her again.

Upon leaving the University at the end of the term, Wallraven and myself had taken up our abode temporarily at a hotel, where we were mutually engaged in preparations for our respective journeys, and where I was turning over in my mind the question of inviting or not inviting Wolfgang to Willow Hill.

It was the third day of our sojourn there, that Wallraven and myself were sitting together in a parlor that we occupied jointly, when, without any premonition whatever, the door was gently thrown open by a waiter, who announced Miss Fairfield; and, to my extreme astonishment, my sister Regina, weary and travel-stained, but fair and proud as ever advanced into the room!



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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LOST PATRIMONY.

Thou may'st not enter thy fair mansion house,
Thou may'st not pull a sapling from thy hills,
Thou may'st not set thy foot within the fields.—Howard.

"REGINA! my dearest sister! I am delighted and astounded to see you? Whence come you? How come you? But here! before you reply, take this easy chair, and—give me your bonnet! Place your feet upon this footstool! You look weary! You rode all night! Who escorted you? Nay, do not answer! You look so exhausted! Have a glass of water, first, or—a cup of coffee? Wolfgang, my dear fellow!—but no! I will run!"

It was something like this tirade of ejaculations of astonishment, joy, love, and solicitude that I received my sister, placed her in the lounging chair, set a cushion under her feet, and ran off to order refreshments.

I was absent some fifteen minutes; and when I returned, followed by a waiter bringing in coffee, &c., and a chamber-maid to take Miss Fairfield's wraps and receive her orders, I found Wolfgang standing by Regina's side, stooping over her with

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a countenance beaming with happiness, his left arm caressingly encircling her shoulders, his right hand clasping hers, and she no longer pale and weary, but blushing with pride and pleasure, as her radiant eyes were vailed beneath his ardent gaze. He drew off as we entered, and each resumed composure. Regina arose with her accustomed stately self-possession, and, attended by the chambermaid, retired from the room to refresh herself by a change of dress, saying to me, *en passant*, that I might countermand the waiter of refreshments, and, if we had not already breakfasted, she would join us at that meal. I said that we had not, and she left us.

Breakfast for three was served in our parlor, and in half an hour Regina entered, every vestige of fatigue and discomposure fled from her countenance and bearing, and she, attired in a plain, but rich, morning dress of India muslin, looking beautifu. and gracious as ever.

During breakfast, I made no inquiries concerning the motive of her extraordinary journey, at this particular time, when she knew I was so soon to return home. I rightly conjectured that she had a somewhat lengthy explanation to make; besides which, the waiter was in attendance, and

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we could have no confidential conversation in the presence of a servant.

When our meal was over, however, and when the waiter had removed the breakfast service, set the room in order, and retired, Regina seated herself in the easy chair, placed her feet upon the footstool, summoned Wallraven and myself to her side, and, in a calm voice, and with a composed manner, informed us that our agent, using the great power entrusted to him, had converted all our property into cash, and fled with it to the West Indies!—that, too, just when in a few weeks he knew he would be called upon to deliver up his trust! By this piece of unparalleled rascality, we were left—no, not "beggars," nor "penniless," quite. We might have between us, in pocket money, jewelry, and personal appointments, some five or six thousand dollars—that was all.

At first, I was too completely stunned by the news—not of our great loss, but of our attorney's great villany—to feel the real sharpness of our misfortune.

I turned in despair and looked at Wallraven. How would he receive the news of his friends' calamity? When I first turned my eyes full upon him, taking him, as it were, by surprise, he looked

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positively aflame with joy! I had never seen any exhibition of triumph like that in him before! What did he mean? Before I had time to ask, his obstreperousness was reined in, and his features forced into an expression of gravity.

Regina further informed me that she had availed herself of the opportunity afforded by the journey of the Right Reverend Bishop L——, who was traveling north to the Convention, to join her brother; that she had written to warn me of her approach—a letter which, by the way, I had never received.

Miss Fairfield then excused herself, and left us to seek needful repose.

As soon as she had gone, Wolfgang, who had, with difficulty, restrained his excitement all this time, impetuously threw himself down beside me, and, clasping me as if I had been his sweetheart, exclaimed, vehemently—

"My brother! my heart! command my utmost powers and resources—command me! Half my father's wealth is mine when I demand it—it is yours when you want it!"

"Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am not overwhelmed by this misfortune, dear Wolfgang,

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though I am in danger of being so by your whole-hearted goodness."

"And will you let me serve you?"

"Not to the fanatical extent, or in the manner that you propose, my dear Wallraven! You are excited by this news even more than I am. My dear, generous fellow, be quiet. As you perceive, neither my sister nor myself is driven mad by this misfortune. I shall execute now, a plan that I have often thought of, even in my days of independence, and in doing so, enter a line of life for which I have at times had a very strong inclination."

"And what is that?"

"The Christain ministry! I shall immediately curtail every unnecessary expense, reduce my living to the severest economy, convert all my personal effects that can possibly be dispensed with into cash, and commence a course of theological reading."

"Fairfield, you constrain my admiration! Have you, then, no painful regrets for the past—no gnawing anxiety for the future?"

"None for myself."

"You astonish me!"

"But——"

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"Well?"

"For another——"

"Well? 'For another'—for whom, Fairfield? Have you been falling in love? though that could scarcely happen without my knowledge, as we have been so inseparable—but yet, is it so?"

"No, I have not fallen in love. Of course you know that; and you should know also that I speak of my sister!" said I, seriously.

"Your sister!" he exclaimed, in what I thought a very natural surprise. "Your sister!"

"Certainly—my sister."

"And why, pray?"

"Is it so strange that I should feel anxiety for the future of Regina after this serious reverse?"

"No, certainly not—assuredly not! Excuse me! I—my thoughts fly occasionally, and I spake, perhaps, rather in reference to my own phase of mind, and from my own point of view, than from yours. Go on, dear Fairfield! Believe me, though my thoughts fly, they only circle round and round you and your interest, my brother. Go on, I pray you! Tell me all your causes for anxiety."

"Regina, then! I could very well support my sister in a small way; or, at a moderate outlay, I

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could establish her at the head of a new female academy—but——"

"Well, my dear friend?"

"Her haughtiness of heart unfits her alike for dependence upon me, or servitude of others. This lofty pride troubles me the more, that I have no sort of sympathy with it—cannot understand it fully; and, as far as I do, utterly condemn it. Human pride is folly, or insanity. The Savior of the world——"

"Come, Ferdinand, my reverend friend, don't anticipate the privilege of the vestments! For myself, I adore the 'lofty pride' of Miss Fairfield. It is indissolubly entwined with the most exalted virtues, which could not exist without it!"

"You speak like a lover!"

"I speak the truth. Her 'lofty pride' sustains the highest sentiments of truth, courage, generosity, fortitude!"

"I have never seen her 'fortitude' tested yet. It is that which I dread!"

"You 'have never seen her fortitude tested!' not even in this sudden and severe reverse of fortune?"

"No, only her courage is tested here. She met, but has not yet borne, the evils of this mis-

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fortune! Courage only meets calamity bravely; it takes fortitude to endure it strongly and patiently. Courage dares misfortune—fortitude sustains it; courage——"

"Courage is acute fortitude, and fortitude is chronic courage! you mean, medically speaking!"

"Fudge!"

"Certainly! I beg your pardon, Fairfield, for cutting short, both your sermon on pride, and your ethical and metaphysical essay on courage and fortitude, because the former was ill-timed, the latter essentially unphilosophical, and both would have run to, I know not what length! Now, then, let us return to the more attractive subject of Miss Fairfield. You were saying——"

"I was saying that I have no sympathy with my sister's pride! I do not understand it, and it troubles me for her future."

"And I repeat most emphatically, that I adore that pride!"

"You are an enthusiast!"

"I worship that pride—that lofty spirit, which is not assumption, nor arrogance, but a calm, majestic, unconscious assertion of her own inestimable worth! of her own essential, unalienable worth! of her own essential, unalienable royalty!

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the triune royalty of transcendent beauty, goodness, and genius!"

"Oh! you are mad!"

"'Honor to whom honor is due!'"

"Yes! but that is not to the haughty! He who spake those words, said also, 'The humble shall be exalted, and the proud shall be brought low'—'He that exalteth himself shall be abased;' and 'The meek shall inherit the earth.'—'Pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty temper before destruction.' You doubtless will give me more contempt for what you will consider weakness, than credit for the fear of God; but I confess that these things trouble me for my dearest sister! It seems to me that her severe discipline has already begun! I do hope——"

"Pshaw! hush! Nonsense! Don't preach! You're not in the holy orders yet!" exclaimed Wolfgang, interrupting me, in a husky voice and with an agitated manner.

I looked at him in surprise.

He shuddered twice or thrice in his old way got up and walked to the window, and said,

"It seems to me you are croaking this evening, Fairfield! to say nothing of a very unbrotherly severity to a trait of character in your only sister,

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which I for one cannot consider a fault, but must look upon with high respect, even when——"

He stopped abruptly.

"When carried to excess?"

"Yes! something of that sort!" he said, with an involuntary writhe of his beautiful lips.

A twinge of remorse wrung me for an instant. I felt that I had been severe with the foible of my dear Regina, and that it was not only ungenerous, but unjust, to speak of her fault in her absence; so I hastened to say,

"You know that I have no fraternal insensibility to my sister's noble character, Wolfgang!"

"Ah! you have! You do not see, do not acknowledge that it is pride that keeps that high, pure character so spotless from even conventional little meannesses!"

"Yes, I do! but I see also that 'pride' makes Regina sternly uncompromising, terribly intolerant of the little social and conventional meannesses and falsehoods of others!"

The effect of my words upon him was as fearful as unexpected! He blanched suddenly, dropped into a chair, and glared luridly from under the shade of his long black lashes at me, as if I had wilfully and wantonly outraged him.

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I was about done with surprise at any eccentric motion of Wallraven; and fate, or something, impelled me to go on. "What is neither always reasonable nor Christian, her high-toned sense of honor, is morbid, even to mania. Deception, no matter how well, how logically defended, finds no tolerance with her. It would disgust her in a mere acquaintance; it would alienate her forever from a friend; and in one she loved pre-eminently, it would kill or madden her. I know and feel it. It is this that has terrified me for my sister! It is this that makes me shudder when I recall the fearful words, the thunder words—'Pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty temper before destruction!'" I suddenly felt a strong grasp upon my shoulder, and the husky, inaudible words,

"For God's sake, hush!" and Wallraven rushed out of the room.

"I have something to say to you, dear Ferdinand," said my sister Regina, laying her fair hand affectionately on my shoulder, and sinking softly into a chair by my side.

She looked so fair, so proud, so joyous, yet—so charmingly embarrassed.

"Why, how beautiful you are, Regina! Queen Blanche! Fair one with golden locks!" ex-

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claimed I, in involuntary admiration and fondness. And she was! Dazzlingly beautiful! She had arisen, restored by her long morning sleep, refreshed by her cold bath, and dressed for dinner. She wore a very light blue silk, with fine lace falls to the short sleeves, and low corsage. Her splendid pale gold hair was rolled back from her snowy forehead and temples in shining bandeaus, and woven in a large knot behind. She had floated in and sunk down by me softly, lightly, gracefully, as a sun-gilded azure cloud, a vision of celestial beauty!

"I have something to say to you, dear Ferdinand," she repeated, without deigning to notice my admiration.

"I listen, dear Regina," said I, seriously.

"Brother, I am engaged to be married to Wolfgang Wallraven."

I started to my feet, throwing off her hand by my violence, and exclaiming vehemently,

"No!"

"Are you surprised?" she serenely inquired.

"No, Regina! No!" I exclaimed, emphatically, without replying to her last observation.

"Yes, then, if I must repeat my declaration."

"No, it is not! it must not! it shall not be so."

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"Why?" she asked, calmly, with scarcely a perceptible inflection of surprise and contempt in her tone.

"You must not—shall not—cannot marry Wallraven!"

"Will you endeavor to make yourself intelligible, Ferdinand?" she demanded, coldly.

"Wallraven cannot in honor marry you, and he knows it!"

Her snowy brow grew purple; she drew her proud crest haughtily up, and was preparing silently to rise and leave the room; when I laid my hand upon her with an imploring gesture, and rising, went and turned the key in the door, sat down by her side, and beseeching her by our fraternal love to listen to me with some little toleration, I began, and gave her a minute, detailed account of my whole confidential connection with Wallraven; commencing from our earliest school days; passing through our life at the preparatory school; through our college friendship; including our joint visit to Willow Hill, with the extraordinary scene in his chamber; and, lastly, my recent visit to Hickory Hall, with the frightful occurrence in my chamber in the dead of the first night of my arrival. I ended with imploring my sister,

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as she valued her happiness, not to risk it by a marriage with him. For any other good purpose than that of doing my own duty and exonerating my own conscience, I might just as well have been silent.

Regina heard me through; though, as my story progressed, I saw her lip curl, and curl, with a slowly gathering contempt; and when I finished, she arose with flashing eyes, and answered me with a blasting, consuming scorn, anger, and defiance—accusing me of degrading suspicions—degrading to myself and to no one else—of treachery to my friend—of—I know not what besides; and expressing, with the air of an empress, her highest trust in Wolfgang Wallraven's unimpeachable purity and honor. In short, she replied to me as any other haughty, high-spirited woman would reply to aspersions so cast upon the man she deigned to accept.

I attempted a rejoinder; but resuming her sovereign self-possession, with a gesture full of high command, she silently indicated her will to leave the room; and I went to the door, unlocked, and held it open while she swept majestically through.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BRIDE'S DOWRY.

I FELT myself relieved of a most disagreeable duty, which had been pressing upon me for some time, though certainly placed in a very unpleasant position. Loving Wolfgang and Regina almost with equal affection, and loving none others in the world but them, I wished their happiness above all things. Could their union have seemed likely to secure their felicity, I should have desired it more than any other event. But, from all I had seen and heard, I feared that it would end in misery to both; therefore I had sought to serve them best by attempting to break it off, and I had attained no better end than to deeply offend both my friend and sister. One lesson I learned, that it is useless and absurd to interfere between lovers who really love each other. I determined however, to tell Wolfgang all I had said to Regina. I could not conceal this from him, for I could not have any thing approximating towards a treachery upon my conscience.

The dinner bell rang in the midst of my painful cogitations, and mechanically, as a matter of habit,

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I sauntered down into the dining-room, and took my seat at the table.

Soon the door opened, and Wallraven entered with Regina on his arm, and they took their places, which were first and second above mine, Regina sitting between me and Wolfgang.

By nothing on Regina's fair, frosty brow, or in her usually calm, cold manner, could I perceive whether she were still angry with me.

Wolfgang looked black as the muzzle of a loaded cannon; but whether with anger, gloom, or both, I could not tell.

After dinner, a pair of horses were brought around, and Wallraven invited Regina to ride, to which she assented, and I was left to my unpleasant company and thoughts for the rest of the afternoon.

Very late in the afternoon they returned. Regina went to her chamber to change her riding-habit, and Wallraven came into our parlor, where I was still sitting. He rang the bell, and, throwing his whip, cap, gloves, etc., to the waiter, who entered, directed him to bring wine. I approached him.

"Wallraven!"

"Well!"

"I have something offensive to say to you!"

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"Out with it, man!"

"You will be angry!"

"If I am, I shall knock you down first and forgive you afterward."

"That will be Christian, but dangerous. You are engaged to my sister."

"How do you know that?"

"She told me."

"Well, what then? you told me to win her if I could.

"Yes; but——"

"Well!"

"Circumstances have transpired since then—"

"You made no allowance for circumstances."

"I was wrong—hasty—very indiscreet!"

"Ah! well! 'circumstances have transpired! To what 'circumstances' do you allude!"

"Among other things, the events of a night at Hickory Hall!"

Wallraven grew very pale, but commanded himself.

"Will you relate to me those events?" he asked, in a constrained voice.

"Certainly," replied I, and detailed to him the occurrences of my first night at Hickory Hall. To my surprise he looked infinitely relieved,

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though the laugh was unnatural with which he said,

"You cannot believe it possible that the turtle soup and deviled partridges gave you a horrible nightmare, can you?"

"No, truly, I cannot. What I saw was real."

"Fairfield, when next you visit Hickory Hall, look into the library, and on the third shelf in the second arch on the right hand of the chimney-piece, you will find Sir Walter Scott's complete works. Select from among them his volume on Demonology, and read it with attention. I think it will do you good," said he, with a calm, deliberate manner.

"What I was about to say to you, Wolfgang, was this: I felt it to be my duty to my sister to inform her of all I know of your history, as well as to hint to her all I suspect!" And I looked, expecting him to explode. He was quiet as a bombshell untouched.

"Ah! you told her?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, Wallraven, I implored her, as she valued her happiness, not to risk it by marrying you. I used every argument and entreaty in my

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power to enforce or persuade her to break with you——"

"And the result——"

"Was utterly unsuccessful."

"No more than that?"

"Yes; much more! I was totally defeated, routed, blasted by the lightning of her angry scorn, and I wonder that a bit of me is left to tell the tale!"

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! I knew it!"

"I said every thing I could say to your injury, Wolfgang, and, having done so, I come to tell you of it—not in defiance, but in frankness."

"God bless you, Fairfield! there! I believe that is the first time in all my life, at least since my angel mother went to heaven, that I have prayed! but happy love makes one grateful and devout. God bless you, Fairfield, for you were true to your sister, to my bride! my idolized Regina! You were right to tell her all you know, which was—nothing; and all you suspect, which was—something less! But, Fairfield, my dear fellow, having made up my own mind to marry her, it is quite settled! Let your conscience rest, for you cannot help it! What is your eloquence to mine, when I love her? What is the power

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of all men and devils over her, compared to mine, when she loves me? It is settled. All earth and hell could not part us now! It is settled. I wrote to my father this noon. I shall take my wife to Paris immediately after our marriage. I intend to make our home there for many, many years—perhaps forever? France is really the only civilized country in this barbarous world! Paris, only, is really enlightened! or, beginning to be. Yes! Paris shall be our home. Go with us, Fairfield, will you not?"

"No! to that modern Sodom I will never go You, Wallraven, if I know you, will never like a place where the sanctity of home and hearth is unknown! You will be only, at best, a refugee in Paris—from what I suppose—nay, I hope—I may never know."

"Yes, you will know, some day, when I can tell you my humiliating secret proudly! Then you shall know!"

"God grant that you may be able to do so, Wolfgang, my brother!"

Regina at this moment entered the room, every sign of displeasure vanished from her radiant brow.

I made no further opposition. I crushed down

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in the bottom of my heart my foreboding fears, and tried to hope. Now that it was useless to look on the dark side, I turned resolutely to the bright one, which was really very bright. Wolfgang—young, handsome, talented, accomplished and wealthy—the distinguished graduate of the University, now radiant with the glory of his recent collegiate honors, adoring my sister and adored by her. Yes! I would look only on this side of the picture, where all was brilliant!

The next day we received a visit from Bishop L——, under whose care Regina had traveled North. He condoled with us upon our misfortune when he came, but congratulated us upon our firmness and gayety when he went away.

I promised to return his call; and accordingly upon the second day I did so, and took that opportunity of informing him of my sister's contemplated marriage with Wolfgang Wallraven, and of unfolding to him my desire to enter a course of theological reading for the purpose of taking holy orders. I told him how long this had been on my mind, how long, even before I dreamed of a possible loss of fortune.

He highly approved my design, and placed his library at my service, inviting me at the same time

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to return with him to the South, and take up my abode for the present at his house.

There were many reasons why I should feel no scruple in accepting the assistance of the venerable old man. He had in his youth been indebted to my grandfather for his own education, and subsequent establishment in the church in which he had risen to such high honor. Now, in his age, he had wealth, a large house, an extensive library, and but a small family, consisting of his wife, one son and a daughter. He seemed very anxious to assist me, and soon overruled my faint objections.

I told him, however, that it would be impossible for me to return with him, or go South at all, until after my sister's marriage, when I promised to do so.

When I returned, I found that Wallraven and Regina had walked out together. They did not return until the dinner hour.

I pass over two weeks, the mornings of which were spent in walking, or riding out, or reading, music or conversation at home; and the evenings, in attending lectures and concerts abroad, or in some social pastime in our own parlor.

Regina was proudly, though bashfully, joyous.

Wallraven exhibited a haughty and happy self-

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consciousness, that became him greatly. Every day his step was more stately and elastic, his eye more steady and commanding. The regnant spirit was assuredly triumphant now!

At the end of two weeks, early one morning, he entered my chamber and laid before me two papers, indicating the one that I should read first.

That was a letter from his father, Mr. Wallraven, giving consent to his marriage, and filled with affectionate expressions of regard for his bride and earnest prayers for the happiness of both, regretting that his infirmities must prevent his traveling North to be present at their marriage, and pressing Wolfgang to bring his wife to Hickory Hall immediately after the ceremony. His letter ended with a message of affection and esteem for myself, a fervent tender of service, and an invitation to accompany my sister and her husband to Virginia. The letter was like the old gentleman himself, full of delicate beneficence, exalted love and magnanimity, yet through all betraying an undertone of sadness, solemnity, almost gloom. I was deeply affected on reading it.

Wolfgang slipped it from my hand, and placed the other paper before me.

This was the attested copy of a deed settling one

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hundred thousand dollars on Regina Fairfield. I read this twice, or thrice, before I looked up to see Wallraven leaning over my chair with an expression of generous satisfaction.

"Why, what is the meaning of this, Wallraven?" inquired I, with the feeling and the tone of embarrassment.

"It means to express my own and my father's deep sense of the high honor Miss Fairfield confers upon us in bestowing her hand on me!" he replied, in a sad, earnest, and somewhat bitter tone.

"But this is wrong, utterly wrong, Wallraven. Regina's whole fortune now does not amount to more than three thousand dollars—a sum scarcely sufficient to provide the *trousseau* of a Wallraven bride. If you will have her, in the name of heaven take her; but do not think of giving so much where nothing is given in return."

"She gives me her priceless self," he answered, almost mournfully; then, after a short pause, added, "I am glad that it is so. I am glad that she is dowerless. I would confer every thing upon my bride; receive nothing from her but her love, and still be her debtor, and still tremble for—— oh, God!" he ejaculated, abruptly pausing.

"Regina herself, for the reason that she brings

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you no property, will object to receiving this munificent settlement."

"She must not! It is the time-honored custom of our family. It has always been the rule of the Wallravens to settle that dower upon the lady whom their heir should select as a bride, and who should respond to his love. Her fastidiousness must make her no exception to this rule. Indeed, her refined deliacy and pure, high pride will prevent her seeing the matter as you do. She will not for a moment degrade her sentiments by mixing them up with these subjects!"

It was thus that the wayward and erring, but generous fellow ever deified even the greatest faults of his betrothed. I felt, when he spoke, that, with all his eccentricities, he was so much better than Regina as to be utterly blind to one thing which was quite apparent to me: namely, that as some diseases infect the whole physical system, so pride pervaded the whole mental and moral being of Regina Fairfield. Pride was the life of her love for Wallraven. Had not Wolfgang Wallraven been the eldest son and heir of an ancient and immensely wealthy Virginia family, living in her own old ancestral neighborhood—had he not been singularly handsome in person, grace-

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ful and dignified in manners, brilliant and profound in conversation, and endowed with genius that gave promise of an illustrious career—he never could have made so deep an impression upon Regina Fairfield's imagination and heart.

While seeing this, I saw in every glance, tone, and gesture of Wolfgang, that he must have worshipped her under any circumstances. How passionately fond of her he was! How entirely devoted to her service! How patient—he, the willful, haughty, sarcastic Wolfgang—how patient of her arrogance, her cold exactions! It always seemed to me that my beloved Regina walked in the moral illusion in which she had been brought up, as if the world had been created for her use and the people for her service. She accepted the most arduous and unremitting, and even the munificent marriage settlement, with such real and sovereign *nonchalance*, as such a mere matter of course, deserving neither acknowledgment, gratitude, nor remembrance. And this regal indifference, which would have grieved me deeply, had I been in Wallraven's place, never affected him in the least.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE VICTIM BRIDE.

"A dream is on my soul!
I see a slumberer crowned with flowers, and smiling
As in delighted visions, on the brink
Of a dread chasm!"—HEMAN'S VESPERS OF PALERMO.

THEIR marriage day was at length fixed for the next Thursday fortnight. Bishop L——was to perform the ceremony, immediately after which we were to set out for Hickory Hall.

Wallraven had intended to go immediately to Paris, but Regina had expressed her will, that they should, according to the wish of the old gentleman and the time honored custom of Virginia, spend the honeymoon in retirement, at the patrimonial house of the bridegroom, Hickory Hall.

Wallraven hesitated, looked disturbed, made—I know not what sort of excuse for opposing this plan.

Regina good-humoredly persisted in her purpose.

Wallraven expostulated seriously.

Regina was charmingly immovable.

For the first time in their lives, Wallraven decidedly vetoed her will, and gave it his final determination, for reasons of the utmost moment, to proceed to Paris. Wolfgang gave this decision

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in a firm, grave, though affectionate tone; but Regina became extremely offended. Finally—

Wallraven bowed his will to hers, and retired to his chamber with a gloomy brow, to write and accept his father's invitation, and prepare them to receive us.

Wolfgang remained in his room all the forenoon; and so, when I wished to speak to him—thinking that he had surely long finished his letter—I went to his door, and, according to our usual familiar and unceremonious habit with each other, without rapping, entered his room.

He was so closely engaged in writing—so absorbed, in fact—that he did not perceive my entrance until I had approached the side of his chair, and had involuntarily seen that he had reached the fifth page of a foolscap letter.

I spoke to him.

He started, thrust the letter into his writing-desk, and turned around. He looked paler, more gloomy, than I had seen him look for six months, or more.

He told me that, in consequence of the change of plan by which we were to go to Hickory Hall, instead of abroad, he had written, among other things, for his sister Constantia to come on and be

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present at his marriage, inquiring of me, with much interest, how I supposed Miss Fairfield would like Constantia.

I told him what I thought, namely—that Regina could not fail to admire and love Miss Wallraven.

He seemed pleased, and then I reminded him of an engagement he had made to ride with me that afternoon. He smiled mournfully—said that it had escaped his memory, but that he would soon be ready.

From this time it was evident that Wallraven's cheerfulness was gone. He had apparently purchased peace with his bride at a very dear and dangerous rate. His gloom deepened day by day, or was varied only by fitful flashes of false gayety, or spasms of sharp anxiety. These evil symptoms, however, were never betrayed except in the absence of Regina. In her presence he would always resolutely command himself, and act a gay tranquility which was far from his real state of feeling. I do not know whether Regina penetrated his mask or not. If so, she never permitted me to see that she did.

She was certainly very much pleased with the prospect of going to Hickory Hall, and of having

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Constantia Wallraven for a bridesmaid and a travling companion. Smiling, she said to me one day,

"Do you know, Ferdinand, what makes me so wicked about this matter of going to Hickory Hall? It is to see that fine old Virginia gentleman, whom I shall love as a father, and whose love I wish to win. I cannot bear the idea of going to France without even setting eyes upon him whom I love to regard as a second father. I do not care if the old Hall is tumbling down! There is a certain prestige of old respectability about that dilapidated building, which does not always surround a smart-looking new tenement, however large and costly."

Then turning to Wallraven, she said,

"Such an absurd mistake of your highness, my Prince of Darkness! that of supposing that I should be shocked at the worn appearance of the old house!"

The day previous to her wedding-day she came into my room. Smiling and sinking softly in a chair at my side, she said,

"Oh! Ferdinand, I am so well pleased. Wolfgang has a letter from his father, and now it is certain that Miss Wallraven will be with us this evening, and attended by—whom do you suppose?

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her twin brother, Constant, Wolfgang's younger brother! You never told me of him!"

"I knew nothing about him! What a queer, silent fellow your *parti* is, Regina! I wonder how many other brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins are to turn up."

"Oh, none! This Constant, who is a year younger that Wolfgang, has been for twelve months traveling in Europe, and has recently returned."

"Ah! and they come this evening?"

"Yes! Ah, Ferdinand! I shall have a sister, I do not care for Constant much. I do not care for the brother I shall gain, for I have already one dear brother; but I care very much for the father and the sister I shall have. I have been lonely, Ferdinand. I have borne within my bosom a cold heart, because I have had no mother or sister to keep it warm. For some reason or other, I never formed a female friendship in my life. I never could bring myself to make advances to other young ladies, and something within me repelled others from making advances to me. I have, with all my independence, needed that sisterly relation. Generally, I have been cold and strong enough; yet sometimes I have felt myself suddenly droop, with an utter weakness, for the want of some

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gentle woman friend whom I could love, whom I could trust. Now, in the failure of a sister of my own, my husband's sister will become inexpressibly dear to me; at least, I feel as if it would be so. I think it will be her own fault if it be not so."

I wondered to hear Regina speak so. It was the first glimpse, with one exception, that I had ever had of the heart within her cold bosom. Yes, I wondered, until I remembered that under the snow of earliest spring the grain still germinates unseen in the warm and genial soil.

That evening, according to appointment, Mr. and Miss Wallraven arrived.

In the bustle of their arrival, I had little opportunity of making observations.

After supper, however, when we were all—the three Wallravens, Regina and myself—assembled in our parlor, I had every facility for studying my prospective relatives.

First, I saw that Regina was more than satisfied with the new brother and sister.

Constant Wallraven was nearly the fac simile of Wolfgang—the same tall, slight, elegant figure, the same haughty set of the head, the same light-gray blazing eyes, the same wilderness of slightly curling, silky black hair, jet black eyebrows, and long,



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black lashes. But he looked stronger, older, and more settled than Wolfgang. He looked as if at some time not far distant in the past, he had been just such a chaotic assemblage of discordant elements as Wolfgang now was; and as if some mighty power had forcibly subdued the chaos, bringing out of it a world of harmony, beauty and strength. Withal, there was an expression of frankness, good humor, and health of mind and body on his handsome face, which testified that the transforming power, whatever it had been, had not crushed but disciplined him. Only by the perfect repose, perfect harmony of these antipathetic elements of character betrayed in his features and complexion, could one judge of the pre-existence of a disciplining experience. One saw in him now a man who, though still quite young, had gained the great victory of his life: whose manner of existence and work was henceforth defined, laid out, and well understood.

I felt instinctively a high respect for, and a strong attraction to Constant Wallraven, as to a soul more exalted than my own.

Constantia was the same dark, majestic, superbly beautiful woman I had seen her by night at Hickory Hall. I do not know that my artist taste was

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ever so highly gratified as by comparing these two young girls, Constantia and Regina, both so perfectly beautiful, yet so opposite in their forms, features, and complexion; yes, and style — though both were of the queenly order. Constantia's was a natural dignity, Regina's a conventional stateliness. Upon the whole, we were all pleased with each other, and it was on the stroke of twelve before we parted for the night.

Once or twice I had observed an unwonted thoughtfulness upon the usually clear, open countenance of my sister; but that was so natural under the circumstances, that it made no impression on my mind. When I had retired to my room, however, and before I had time to begin to take off my dress, I heard a tap at my room door, and, thinking that it was of course Wolfgang, I bade him come in. The door opened, and my sister entered, and sunk softly down in her usual seat, near my dressing-table. I looked at her inquiringly, anxiously. The stately gayety which had distinguished her all the afternoon and evening had quite gone, and the thoughtfulness that had once or twice, cloud-like, flitted past the sunshiny snow of her countenance, was now settled into a profound gloom.

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"My dear Regina, you look so grave! but then this is a serious time to you!"

To my astonishment, she burst into tears, and dropped her head upon my dressing-table.

"Regina, my dear sister, what is this? Tell me?" But she sobbed on.

"Regina, you alarm and distress me! What is this?"

But she sobbed on, and I sat down by her side, took her hand and pressed it, while I waited silently for her to tell me the subject of her grief. When her fit of weeping had expended itself, she lifted up her head, dried her eyes, and, after remaining silent and still for a little while, she said,

"You think me now sentimental, maudlin, sickening. I feel that you do. I am not that. I never was so. You ought to know it."

"I do know it, my dearest sister; and sentimentality is the last fault I should suspect you of. I know that you are strong, cool, and spirited—therefore I have been the more surprised and distressed at your tears this night. I know that it is natural—nay, generally inevitable—that a girl should drop some—not very bitter—tears on bid ding good-bye to her maiden life and liberty; but I had scarcely expected to see you do so, inasmuch

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as you have less to regret, and more to hope for, than most young maidens similarly situated—nevertheless, I suppose these 'natural tears' must fall!" said I, gently caressing her.

She replied mockingly,

"Ah! it is quite proper for a bride to weep, then? Like the ring and the white kid gloves, it is an indispensable ingredient in the wedding-dish! —It is understood and expected of us, in short—and people would be shocked and disappointed if it were omitted."

"Regina—sister," said I, tenderly.

"Certainly! Half the trashy songs I learned to sing at school were—not after my own taste, the martial—but such mawkish ditties as the 'Bride's Adieu,' etc."

"Humph! Wolfgang's queerities are certainly contagious; that I know of my own experience," said I; and I dropped suddenly into a short reverie upon the contagion of resemblance between persons of no consanguinity who love each other and are constantly associated.

Feeling too deeply interested in my sister's emotions to indulge, even for five minutes, in this tempting subject, I turned, stole my arm around her waist, and said, gently,

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"Regina, my dearest sister, to-morrow I will scarcely have a right to do this," and I gathered her to my bosom, and pressed my lips to hers. "To-morrow, certainly, I shall have no right to question your happiness, or the state of your affections; do not, therefore, be proud or cold towards me, like your worse self; and do not be sarcastic, bitter, or satirical towards me, for that is not like yourself at all. That you have caught from Wolfgang; but, tell me, what has so deeply, strongly moved you this evening? It is not an imaginary grief, nor a real one, if slight, that could trouble you so much—what is it then?

She did not reply; but remained in my lap with her arms thrown up over my shoulders, and her face over my bosom.

I spoke again.

"You have apparently less to alloy your happiness than almost any other bride. You have less to regret and more to hope for. You leave no dear, familiar home, no honored father, no beloved mother, no dear sister — wherefore should you grieve?"

"I leave you, my dearest brother! I leave you, the sole remnant of our family circle! I leave

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you who stood to me for father, mother, sister, home!"

"Yet leaving me, dearest Regina, should not cost you a sigh! nay, it will not! Dearly as we have ever loved each other, we have not been together much; therefore you will still remember and love me, without throwing away a sigh upon my absence."

"Yes! so you have judged my heart! You have studied me so well!" she replied, almost bitterly. "The one thing I looked forward to in life was a re-union with my only brother, Ferdinand—and you know it was the main topic of all my letters; yet now you judge me able to part with you for a long, indefinite time—perhaps forever—without pain."

"At least, so I would have it, dearest sister. I am not so selfish as to wish you to regret my absence!"

"But I should regret it! I shall regret it, if I cannot persuade you to go with us, as I hope to do! as I must do!

"As you will not do! But it is not I for whom or by whom you sorrow now! Tell me, then, what it is, dearest sister, while it is not yet too late! To-morrow—yes! in seven hours from

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this—for it is now one o'clock—I shall have no right to ask you!"

"I will tell you, then. My heart is dreadfully oppressed! Oh, how I do wish that I had a mother, an aunt, a married sister, a matronly friend—any wise gentlewoman, upon whose bosom I could lay my head as I lay it now on yours, and ask her in a whisper if upon the eve of her bridal day she was visited with such terrible forebodings as I am now—such anxieties—such funereal presentiments!"

"How long has this been so with you, Regina?"

"Oh! for days, or rather for nights past—in the day time I have been amused, and forgetful, but at night, as soon as I get to sleep, I start from my first sleep in a terrible panic! just as a condemned criminal might be awakened out of deep, sweet sleep, with the sudden recollection that he was shortly to be hanged. To-morrow is my wedding-day; yet it terrifies me as though it was the day of my execution! I do not believe Madame Roland and the heroines of the Reign of Terror dreaded the guillotine half as much as I dread the altar!"

Gloomily as my sister spoke, or, perhaps, because

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she did speak so gloomily of what appeared to me to be only considerable exaggeration of a very natural feeling, for the life of me I could not help langhing, in which, to my surprise, I was joined by Regina, who raised her head from its resting-place, and, arising from my lap, sat down beside me.

"I would be an old maid, then, if I were you. There is no law against it, and this is a free country!" said I.

"I know it is foolish—this presentiment——"

"Presentiment!"

"Yes, presentiment—this dark, uncertain, slippery, cold feeling of the precipice edge!" she replied, gravely—her flush of mirth quite gone.

"But this will pass away in a few days, Regina. You love Wolfgang."

"Yes, and dread him more! Oh! listen, Ferdinand! Listen, my dear brother! I will open my heart to you this first and last time! for once! for to-morrow, as you say, you will have no right to inquire into the secrets of my bosom. I will have no right to communicate them to-morrow; this would be an infringement of my marriage vow; to-morrow my oath of allegiance would make these confidences treachery. Listen then

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I do love Wolfgang quite as much as I am capable of loving any one—almost as much as he loves me. I have loved him almost from the first evening of our meeting; but, since our engagement, lately—now listen! for, contradictory as what I am now about to tell you may appear, it is nevertheless true—though inexplicable to me, as it may seem to you. Lately, as I said, while I am strongly attached to Wolfgang, I am as strongly repulsed! It is as if some principle in my being were powerfully drawn toward him, while another principle was as powerfully repelled; or, as if some element in Wolfgang's nature possesses for me irresistible fascination, while some other element affects me with disgust—which fills me with remorse—which I endeavor to conquer—which I only succeed in concealing!"

"You have succeeded in that! I never suspected it!"

"Thus, you see, my bosom is made the battle-field of warring emotions, and over all broods this dark presentiment, like the lowering black clouds of some approaching and destructive storm!"

"Do not marry him!" said I, earnestly.

"I must! The hand of fate is on me! I have no power to stop myself!"

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"Then I can stop you! I can be stronger than fate! You shall not be married!"

"But I will! I love him! If I had the power I would tear out from my bosom that which occasionally recoils from him, though it were one ventricle of my heart! It is half past one o'clock; my marriage-day has come, dearest brother; dearest, only brother! I only came in to kiss you."

"To give me an opportunity, for the last time, of pressing my maiden sister to my bosom," said I, as I held her there.

"Yes! and with no intention of afflicting you with my equinoctial storms——"

"Your—what?"

"My equinoctial storms—the clouds, the thunder, lightnings, and showers, that have marked my approach to the line matrimonial!" And dashing clouds and tears from her now sparkling face, she kissed me and vanished from the room.

In the silence of the night, after she had left the chamber, I heard the pattering of rain-drops against the windows. I went to them and looked out, and found the sky black and lowering with clouds, and the streets drenched with rain. I turned away, and at last throwing off my clothes, lay down to

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try to sleep. My spirits were heavily oppressed. There is nothing more disheartening than to feel some evil fate impending over those we love, and to know ourselves powerless to avert it. However, wearied out, and lulled by the sedative pattering of the rain-drops, I fell into a dreamless sleep, and slept till morning.

It was a dark, drizzling, dull morning. At seven o'clock we met in the parlor, to go together to church. We had ordered breakfast at eight The stage in which we had engaged places was to start at nine. Wallraven looked happy and—frightened, and seemed to strive for self-command.

Regina's countenance, like a spring sky, seemed all the brighter for her equinoctial storm. She wore a beautiful dress of full white blonde over white satin, with fine lace trimmings, and pearl bracelets and necklace on her arms and neck, and a pearl bandeau turning back her blonde hair, and fastening a large, floating, mist-like vail. Miss Wallraven was attired in a somewhat similar style. Again I was struck by the contrast presented by these two young women—the blonde and the brunette—both so dazzling, beautiful, yet so unlike. One, clear, bright, morning sunshine—the other, resplendent starlight.

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We stepped into the carriage, and were driven to the church. We found Bishop L—— punctual, waiting for us. We ranged ourselves before the altar, Constant and Constantia acting as groomsman and bridesmaid, and I giving away the bride.

After the ceremony was over, we returned, accompanied by Bishop L——, to breakfast, and in an hour afterward, bidding adieu to our venerable friend we took our seats in the stage and set out upon our journey to Virginia. The rain ceased and the sun shone out at noon.

It had been arranged among us, as the season was very beautiful, and certain parts of the country through which our roads lay very picturesque, that we should travel leisurely, taking a week for the journey.

At Washington we found the large family carriage of the Wallravens, that had been sent to meet us there, and that had been waiting for us for several days. We remained in the city two days, to visit the Capitol, Navy Yard, Government Departments, etc., and the third day entered the capacious and comfortable travelling carriage, and set off for the Blue Ridge and Hickory Hall. This journey, from Washington to the Blue Ridge, was one of the most delightful journeys I ever took.

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Our carriage was not only convenient, it was luxurious. We were attended by our own servants, took our own route, and kept our own hours. We managed to be six days on a route that we might have travelled in two. Sometimes, at sunrise, after an early breakfast, we would leave the inn at which we had passed the night, and travel leisurely but twenty miles through some picturesque country, reach another quaint country inn by noon, eat dinner, and, after an hour's repose, order saddle horses, spend the afternoon in excursions about the neighborhood, return to tea, and occupy the evening in conversation, or books and music, with which we were provided. We would sleep then, and the next morning, resume our journey, which would be continued with some pleasant new variation. Miss Wallraven and myself were thrown very much together, I found her mind and heart as rich and well cultivated as her person was beautiful and her manners charming. I admired her with enthusiasm; yet, not for one moment was I in the slightest danger of falling in love with her, even if there had not been something in her manner that politely kept me at a certain distance. As for Regina and Wolfgang, they behaved very much like any other bride and groom

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upon their wedding journey—they seemed fond, and shy, and tremulously happy.

In approaching the mountains, and the old neighborhood of the Northern Neck, first settled by her ancestors, Regina became deeply interested in features of the landscape and the local history of the country. Upon reaching any high point on the road, she would order the carriage to be stopped, and while she surveyed the extensive and varied landscape, with its far-apart country-seats and farm-houses surrounded with their little town-like groups of out-houses and negro quarters, and while she picked out with her quick and scrutinizing glances the oldest homesteads of the old settlements, she would ask of Constant Wallraven a score of questions about their first proprietors. The public and private history of many families she knew by fire-side traditions, so as to recognize them as soon as they were named, and look with another and a deeper interest at the places of their habitation.

On approaching, however, that grand pass of the Blue Ridge, known as the Bear's Walk, the historical and traditional interest of the country gave place in her mind to a rapt enthusiasm, as she gazed, silenced and transfixed with admiration and

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awe, upon the sublime and even savage aspect of nature.

It was the fifth day of our journey that we began to ascend the great pass of the Bear's Walk, from the highest point of which Regina gained her first view of Hickory Hall, and saw it under the most favorable circumstances, and in the most favorable light, namely:

We had ridden slowly that day, only fifteen miles, and through the most sublime and beautiful scenery in the world; and now, quite fresh, we found ourselves in the middle of a lovely summer afternoon, upon the summit of the mountain-pass, and gazing down with delighted surprise upon a scene of almost ideal beauty, not to be equaled on earth.

I wondered at the enchanting transformation made by a different and more genial season, and another and a brighter hour. The scene which on a dark, tempestuous winter night had seemed a Gehenna, a Hades, to me, now, in the light of a summer day, appeared a Happy Valley, a Garden of Eden—Elysium itself.

A cup-shaped, small, and deep green vale, shut in by a circle of high mountains. Deep in the bottom of this green vale, gem-like was set the

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old hall, where, in the beams of the evening sun, it glittered and flashed with the ruby lustre of long-exposed red sandstone; around it spread green pastures, embossed with white flocks of sheep; beyond these waved yellow fields of grain, ripe for the sickle; around them passed a girdle of forest trees—behind which arose the circle of intense blue mountains, with their summits against the transparent golden horizon. Through all ran the clear mountain stream, which, springing from a rock at our feet, and leaping down the side of a precipice, glided, flashing in the sun, through the mist of the beautiful vale. Over all smiled the most radiant sky—shone the most splendid sun, I had ever seen.

"How beautiful! how beautiful! It is a terrestrial Paradise!" exclaimed Regina, with enthusiasm. "But," inquired she of Constant Wallraven, while scrutinizing the old hall, "why does not your father repair, or rather rebuild, the house?"

"My father thinks of selling the property."

"Of selling that Eden!"

"Yes! and we all think it the best plan, under existing circumstances."

The difficult descent of the precipice interrupted



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further conversation. The road, however, was in its best condition, and in twenty minutes we had reached the bottom, and soon after drew up before the door of Hickory Hall.

Mr. Wallraven, with the same suit of black, contrasting so strongly with his snow-white hair, with the same venerable appearance, the same social and stately bearing, advanced from the hall to receive us.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE HAG.

A fearful sign stands in thy house of life,
An enemy; a fiend lurks close behind
The radiance of thy planet: oh, be warned!—Coleridge.

WOLFGANG, alighting, handed out Regina, and leading her up the stone steps, presented her with stately and affectionate courtesy. We all followed in turn, and were welcomed in the most cordial manner.

Mr. Wallraven conducted Regina into the house. I followed, with Miss Wallraven upon my arm. Constant and Wolfgang paused behind an instant, and, as I turned to look after them, I saw old John at the end of the portico, and behold Wolf-

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gang step up to him, and heard him inquire, rapidly, under his breath,

"Is she safe?"

And the low reply,

"All secure there, sir!"

"That is well! I shall remember your care for us, John."

The old man bowed in silence, and Wolfgang immediately stepped after us. This little interlude had not occupied ten seconds.

We entered the hall, and were each immediately shown to our separate room.

Old John took me into a different chamber from that which I had occupied before, telling me with a slight smile, that my former sleeping apartment had been prepared for Mrs. Wallraven, as it was the most comfortable one in the house.

He then went and ordered up my baggage, and in the course of half an hour, with the help of John I had refreshed myself with a bath, a shave, and a change of dress.

I even went down into the old oak hall, which had been furbished up in honor of the bride's arrival—that is the oak floor and paneled wall had been rubbed, waxed, and polished, until they shone with a mirror-like lustre, and the wide fire-place

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had been filled with cedar branches, while on the mantle-piece and on the window-sills were placed vases filled with white lilies, Regina's favorite flowers.

I found in the drawing-room, with Mr. Wallraven and Constant, Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, and two young ladies, their cousins—all of whom had come over to Hickory Hall to meet our bridal party.

In a few minutes, Wolfgang and Regina entered, and it was evident her dazzling fairness and stately grace, her whole high, pure style of beauty and of bearing, made what is called a great "sensation," though on a small scale — namely, the small party met there to welcome her.

Soon after the introductions were over, dinner was annonnced. Well! this dinner was like most other Virginia country wedding dinners — more abundance than elegance, and more hospitality than ostentation.

Soon after an early tea, the Davenport party took leave, previously inviting the Wallravens and myself to dine at the parsonage the third day from that—an invitation which Wolfgang accepted in the name of the whole family.

When they were gone, we returned from the

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portico, where we had been standing to see them off, and re-entered the hall.

It was a pleasant place in a summer evening twilight. There were many windows, commanding various sublime and beautiful views, and soft, warm, pleasant airs, and the sweet, vague musical sounds came through them.

I noticed Wolfgang and Regina seated at one of the end windows enjoying the delicious hour without conversation, or only conversing by seeking each other's eyes, or by an occasional low tone.

When the full harvest moon arose, Mr. Wallraven invited us all to come out and walk, and view the scenery by moonlight. With the same stateliness of an old-school gentleman, he gave his arm to Regina, and led the way. Each member of the family vied with each other in assiduous yet delicate attentions to our bride. We spent an hour very pleasantly in strolling through the beautiful and moonlit vale, and then returned to the drawing-room, where refreshments were ordered.

While we were standing around the centre-table in gay conversation, (never before had I seen any member of the family so cheerful,) old John

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appeared at the door with an anxious expression upon his time-worn face.

Mr. Wallraven arose in haste and went out to him. Constantia turned pale, and Wolfgang glared at the intruder with starting eyes and a scowling brow.

I saw that some misfortune had occurred, or was about to occur.

Mr. Wallraven closed the door behind him while talking with the old man; while Wolfgang, as if lost in the sense of other presence, continued to strain his gaze after them.

In a moment, Mr. Wallraven put his head in the door, and beckoned Wolfgang. He started up and shot from the room, without a word of excuse or apology, banging the door to after him. Constant and myself were left alone with the two young ladies.

Regina looked in surprise from the brother to the sister, and then, with her habitual self-possession and politeness, lowered the blaze of the solar lamp so as to throw a soft light upon the table, and, taking up an engraving, made some critical remark upon its merits, submitting it to Constantia's judgment

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But Constantia was pale, trembling, and *distrait*, and gave some reply wide of the mark.

Constant, however, with a deferential "Permit me, madam," took, and, with Regina, examined the picture. Constant was pale and stern, and seemed to have mastered the betrayal of some strong emotion.

They criticised the picture, which was "The Writing on the Wall.

Regina, Constant, and myself, might have passed a tolerable hour, had it not been for Miss Wallraven's increasing and extreme distress. She looked like a second Cassandra, and would start and shudder, pale and glare, as though in momentary expectation of some appalling sight. Her anxiety became so intense that apparently she could endure it no longer, but touched the bell, and, at the entrance of a servant, ordered chamber lights, and, turning to Regina, said,

"Mrs. Wallraven! the clock is on the stroke of twelve, and you have had a fatiguing day. I am ready to show you your chamber."

Regina arose, and, slightly bowing her "Good night," left the room, followed by Constantia. I soon after arose and retired to my own, which was on the same floor with that of Regina.

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I know not what presentiment suddenly overcrept my mind, but, oppressed with a vague and terrible anxiety, I sought to sleep in vain.

Finally I returned to the drawing-room. Constant was gone. It was now empty. The room was so large that the light upon the centre-table barely served to make darkness visible, except in its immediate vicinity. I put up the light of the lamp, and walked up and down the floor, restlessly expecting, but without connecting that feeling with my unaccountable gloom, the return of Mr. Wallraven and Wolfgang. I know not how long I might have been waiting there, when the door swung noiselessly open, and Regina re-entered the room, her hair in disorder, and a dressing-gown hastily thrown on. I turned wonderingly to meet her. I saw then that her fair face was blue-pale, and that she trembled with a nervousness I had never seen her betray before.

"My dear sister! What is the matter?" asked I, leading her to an easy-chair, into which she immediately sank.

"I do not know! Perhaps a dream! Perhaps something real. Listen! I went to my chamber attended by Miss Wallraven only, and no dressing-maid. Miss Wallraven assisted me

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to disrobe; but every few minutes, with a corrugated brow and straining eye, she paused to listen or to watch. Finally she concluded her task, and when I was in bed she drew the curtains, and was about to leave me. Suddenly she turned back and advised me to bolt the door behind her, and then left the room. I did not get up to bolt the door, because I should have had to get up a second time to open it, but I fell asleep, wondering what negro might be on the point of death, or what other trouble had called the Messrs. Wallraven so abruptly from the house. Well! I had no sooner fallen into a deep sleep, than I awakened as by the shock of a galvanic battery, just in time to see the most diabolical-looking old hag that ever nightmare created stooping over me, gazing into my opened eyes with a grin of malignity that seemed to freeze all the blood in my veins. I started violently forward, and she vanished. I was instantly bathed in a cold sweat. I thought this might be a dream, and resolutely composed myself to sleep again—only to be started out of my sleep again by another and a more violent electric shock, and to see again the same eyes of demoniac hatred gazing into mine, to make another instinctive bound, and see the terrible

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night-haunter vanish as before! It was impossible now to sleep, or think of sleep. I hastily threw on my dressing-gown, slipped my feet into slippers, and came down here to await the gentlemen. I have heard of nightmare, but this is the first time I ever was attacked with it, and it was very natural that my excited imagination should then create the illusion of the old hag, after your telling me of what you saw or fancied you saw in that chamber the first night you slept there—There! I feel truly humiliated at these tremors, which I cannot control—Ferdinand! there she is now!"

This last sentence was spoken in a tone of discovery and announcement, as one might use upon finding out an imaginary phantom to be an ugly old woman. I turned and saw, standing within the door in the full light of the candle she held above her head, the hag of my night-vision. She was the most loathsome specimen of humanity I had ever seen, as she stood there some seconds, examining us with the same leer of insult and malignity. There she stood, chuckling with a fiendish grin at the very loathing she excited—repaying the extreme of disgust with the extreme of hatred.

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"What do you want?" I asked.

"Hik-hik-hik-hik!" she answered, with her low, wicked laugh, passing me, and going toward Regina.

"Leave the room!" said I, intercepting her.

She did not heed me, but went on.

"Will you leave the room?" again I asked.

"Yes, when I have kissed my pretty niece," she replied, nodding her head at me with a demon grin.

I stepped quickly up to Regina, with the intention of leading her from the room, and from the revolting presence of what I now supposed to be some gibbering and malign lunatic.

I drew Regina's arm within my own, and we were coming down the length of the room, my sister, with an expression of disgust amounting to pain, contracting her beautiful features. We passed to one side, in order to avoid meeting the hag; but she knew our purpose, crossed the room, and intercepted us.

"Out of our way! Off with yourself instantly!" exclaimed I, angrily.

"Yes! when I have kissed my pretty niece!"

"Begone!" said I, turning off to the other side.

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"Yes! I will, when I kiss my pretty niece!" she persisted.

I did not wish to hurt, and I could not have brought myself to touch the filthy creature. I took up a parasol that lay upon the table, and, placing one end of it against her chest, bore her gently off. She left, and, retreating, planted herself within the doorway. I came on with my weapon, half laughing at the Quixotic figure I cut, charging upon a mad, old negro woman with a parasol, and placed the end of it, as before, against her chest, saying,

"Come! Be good! let us pass!"

But suddenly she raised her talon hand, clutched my weapon, threw it behind her, and, elevating the streaming tallow candle with the other, gazed upon Regina with a countenance full of curiosity, hatred, and expected triumph. My sister drew her arm from mine, and retreated.

"Hik-hik-hik! my pretty niece; you are very fair and very proud! but pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty temper before destruction."

"Off with yourself this moment!" said I, losing patience, "or I shall be tempted to contaminate myself, and put you out!"

"I dare you to touch me!" she said.

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"I shall certainly do so if you do not move in one minute."

"Yes! in a minute, but let me kiss my fair, pretty niece first!"

"You are mad! That lady is Mrs. Wallraven!"

"I know it! My nephew Wolfgang's wife!"

I still thought her crazy; nevertheless an icy pang shot through my heart.

"Who are you?" said I.

"Nell! Old Nell! Yellow Nell! Slave Nell! Hugh Wallraven's sister-in-law! Wolfgang Wallraven's aunt—his mother's sister! Regina Wallraven's near relative! Yes! fair lady! proud as fair! you are my niece."

I turned to look on Regina! to behold a body petrified, as it were, to stone!—from whence the light of reason had fled instantly and forever!

"Come! let me embrace my niece!" and, laughing hideously, she advanced toward my sister.

Regina turned, stepped upon a footstool, thence upon a chair, finally upon the centre-table, and seated herself upon a pile of books with an air of mad majesty and dominion.

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"Order out the guards! To prison with the traitors! To the rack! to the rack with the beldame! Ourself will preside at the question!"

I hurled away the hag, and went to my sister.

"Regina!"

"My Lord Chancellor, let the Prince of Darkness be immediately arrested upon our own charge of high treason!"

"Regina! my dear sister!"

"Let there be no delay! Summon the council! Our life and crown are no longer safe! Traitors lurk in our very bed-chamber, assassins hide in the very shadow of our throne! Already one of the ladies of our bed-chamber—our beloved Regina Fairfield—lies dead before us! The shaft that pierced her heart was aimed at our own sacred life!"

"My God! My God!"

"To the rack! to the rack with the beldame! Strain every limb and nerve and sinew to cracking, until she confess herself the tool of the Prince of Darkness!"

"Oh! heaven!"

"To the rack! to the rack with the hag! We will ourself preside at the question!"

"Regina!"

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"Order out the guards! Summon the council! To prison! to prison with the traitor!" she exclaimed, rising in a sort of mad majesty, her form elevated and dilating, her eye blazing with the fire of insanity, her unbound golden locks rolling in fallen glory to her waist, her left hand folding her rich dressing-gown about her as though it were the ermine purple, her right hand extended in a gesture of high command—a moment—and then lowered with the finger pointed to the door, as she said, "Lo! where the traitor Prince obtrudes himself into our very presence!"

I turned to see at a glance Wolfgang Wallraven enter the room, and the hag shake her clenched fist at him, saying,

"Now is my hatred glutted! Now is my revenge complete. Look to your fair wife!"

Wolfgang's lightning glance caught the whole state of affairs instantly. Rage, grief, and despair, stormed in his face. With the bound of an unchained demon he sprang upon the hag, and, with his hands round her throat, bore her down to the floor, placed his knee upon her chest, and nearly strangled her before I could prevent him. Rising, he spurned the beldame with his foot, and

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turned toward us. His typhoon of anger had subsided; despair, sorrow, tenderness, were all to be seen now, as he approached Regina.

"Off, traitor!" she shouted, seizing from the table an antique dagger, that lay there as an article of rare *virtu*.

He drew near her.

"Off, I say!" she exclaimed, unsheathing and brandishing the dagger. "You come to death!"

"I know it," said Wolfgang.

"Off, traitor! you desecrate our very throne! Nay, then, it shall become your scaffold!" exclaimed she, furiously, shaking the dagger.

"Let me die so," he said, and stepped upon the footstool thence upon the table, and threw his arms around her.

With a savage cry she raised the weapon; the blade gleamed in the lamp-light an instant, and the next was buried deep in the breast of the wretched man, who, without a groan, fell backward, and rolled upon the floor. In the extreme frenzy of mania, Regina bounded from the table, brandishing the crimsoned dagger.

I threw myself suddenly upon her, cast my arms about her, but her struggles were so violent, and her maniac strength so great, that she must

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save escaped me, had not her screams brought the whole household from their beds and into the room.

The scene of amazement, horror, anguish, and despair, that ensued now, defies all description. In the stormy chaos, I saw old Mr. Wallraven sitting on the floor, with the form of the fast-dying Wolfgang drawn into his arms and pillowed upon his chest. I saw Constantia, half dressed, with her black hair streaming, kneeling by his side, wringing her hands.

I saw all this, while, with the assistance of Constant Wallraven, I was disarming and securing the maniac.

"Father! she was mad, father! Do not let her be molested; do not desert her. Protect her, father," faintly murmured the dying man.

"Unhappy boy! tell me one thing. You did not deceive her! You told her your position!"

"Father, no! I had not the courage! I thought to have got her to France, where—oh, God! I die!—where she would never have known—"

"Oh, wretched Wolfgang! I cannot reproach you now! This deception has cost you your life!"

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"And her, her reason, father! I die by her hand! It is just! it is just! it is just! Oh! bring me near her! Let me see her again! Lay me at her feet! Let me die there!"

"Oh! Wolfgang! that you so terribly deceived that unhappy young lady!"

"I loved her so—I loved her so—that, for the brief possession of her love, I endure death. Father! she must not die! She must recover. Nay, she will, when she knows her evil genius, her mortal foe, who loved her unto death, is dead! Take me to her! Lay me at her feet! Let me die there, looking upon her!"

Regina was now lying on the sofa, exhausted by her frantic struggles. Old Mr. Wallraven beckoned Constant, and between them Wolfgang was lifted, brought near the sofa, and laid upon the carpet, with his head supported as before upon his father's arms. He looked up at her, but she did not open her eyes to look upon him. He feebly raised his hand and took hers. At the touch she opened her eyes, and as soon as they fell upon him, with a frenzied cry of anguish and despair, she bounded to her feet, foaming at the mouth, and went into the most violent paroxysm of madness. Constant Wallraven and myself

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seized and tried to hold her; and while she was struggling, plunging, and screaming in our arms, Wolfgang raised himself upon his elbow, gave one long agonised look upon the wreck, fell back and died!

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FATE.

Thus lived—thus died they—never more on them
Shall sorrow light, or shame.—Byron.

The next day a coroner's inquest sat in the saloon, and the crowd, collected by the rumor of what had taken place, filled the house. I was the principal witness, and as soon as I had given in my testimony, and was permitted to retire, I wandered toward the chamber whence the terrible screams of the maniac bride still issued, filling all the air.

Constant, Constantia, and myself, were constant and unremitting in our attentions to my wretched sister. For two days and nights she raved in high delirium, and then sunk, under the united effects of nervous exhaustion and opiates, into a profound stupor.

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Upon this second day the remains of the unfortunate Wolfgang Wallraven were committed to the grave. His funeral was perfectly quiet, attended by his own family and the Davenports.

During all this time, I could realize to myself nothing that had taken or was taking place. I seemed out of myself, in some unreal existence, and, sometimes wildly, desperately, hoped to wake and find it all a hideous dream.

That evening, when we returned from the funeral, I followed Mr. Wallraven to the library.

"Give me," said I, "some explanation of that which has wrecked all our happiness!"

"Be seated!" said the old man, himself sinking exhausted into a chair. I sat down and waited for him to speak. He leaned his forehead down upon his open palm, and, after a silence of a few minutes, sighed heavily, and said:

"I am unequal, now, to the task of giving you any lengthy detail. Listen then! I married my mother's maid. She was a quadroon girl, brought up at my mother's knee; a simple, gentle child, whose life of chamber seclusion had kept her unspotted from the world; a loving, religious child, whose faith in her Heavenly Father was like a babe's innocent trust in its mother. She had

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been taught in her childhood almost to worship her 'young master'— the mother's spoiled and wilful boy — the idol of the household. She learned in girlhood to love him with all the blind and passionate devotion of her race. I had the power of life and death over her—yea, of eternal life and death—for her life hung upon my love—her integrity upon my honor. The alternative for her was a ruined fame, a broken heart, and the grave; or the marriage ring and benediction. The alternative for me was sin without infamy, or infamy without sin—or so it seemed to me in my passionate youth. I chose the latter. I loved her, I married her, and lost caste, I and my children, forever! The whole community recoiled in loathing from us. The minister who united us was ungowned and degraded from his pulpit. Our marriage was declared illegal, and my mother, to oblige me to break the connection, made a will, just before her death, by which she left me Constance and her children, upon condition only of my never freeing them. Upon my attempting to break this condition, they were to become the property of a distant relative. Constance brought me three children—Wolfgang, unhappy boy! and then Constant and Constantia. But they could

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not be my heirs, because they could not legally hold property. At my death they themselves would inevitably become the property of others. And the more legal light I brought to bear upon my mother's will, the more decided was this fact. My other property—the land, negroes, bank stock, hall, and mills—I inherited from my father, without restriction. I was unutterably wretched. Constance, seeing the misery of which she had been the innocent cause, fell into a deep melancholy, from which neither the affection of her children nor my own love and unremitting endeavors could arouse her. Her health failed, and she died when Constant and Constantia were but twelve months old. Again I consulted the ablest lawyers in the State, only to be more than ever convinced that there was no possibility of setting aside my mother's will. There was not in all Virginia a father so unhappy as myself. A thousand times I prayed for the death of my children. If one of them fell ill, I watched the progress of his or her illness with extreme anxiety, not fearing they might die, but fearing they might live! Conscience, and not a wish that they should survive, induced me to provide necessary nursing and medical attendance at such time. At last it

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suddenly occurred to me that I might easily evade the will. It is strange that this expedient never struck me until years of misery had passed; but so it was in my case, and so I have often seen it in the case of others. The remedies for what we conceive to be incurable ills often lie very near us unseen or neglected. It suddenly struck me that nothing hindered my sending my children, while they were mine, to a foreign country, and transferring my whole property thither. I resolved to do so. My sons were then at college, and my daughter at boarding-school in the North. I was in robust health, and of a race never subject to illness or sudden death; therefore I felt that there was no occasion for hurry, and I was not in haste to sell, and leave forever my native soil, while my children were receiving their education. I determined, however, to do it upon the first indication of declining health. Well, month slipped after month, and grew into years. Constant returned from Princeton, where he was educated, and commenced the study of divinity as a private pupil of Mr. Davenport. He formed an unhappy attachment, but Constant possessed a strong mind and righteous heart. He struggled with, and conquered his passion, coming out as pure gold from

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the furnace of his trial. After this experience, I determined to guard my unhappy children from forming indiscreet attachments.

"When Wolfgang returned from Harvard, accompanied by yourself, I saw your sudden admiration of my daughter. I withdrew her from your presence. I warned Wolfgang against the society of young ladies. I knew nothing of your sister, or I never should have consented to his visiting you at your own home. The first knowledge I had of Miss Fairfield was from the letter of Wolfgang that announced his engagement. Without literally telling me so, it was couched in such terms as, with other circumstances, to mislead me into the belief that she knew all! This was not unnatural. I thought that to some his infinitessimal proportion of African blood might be no objection—while his many distinguished—pardon me! It was a father's dotage. Wolfgang told me in his letter that his bride had consented to depart with him to France immediately after the marriage ceremony. This afforded me the opportunity I wanted to secure a fortune to my son, by settling it upon Miss Fairfield—to which there could be no legal obstruction. A few weeks before the marriage I received a long letter

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from Wolfgang, telling me that his Regina, willful as charming, insisted on coming to Hickory Hall, and being introduced to her father-in-law before her departure for France. In this turn of affairs, he requested me to send Constant and Constantia to him, and, above all things, to imprison old Nell, whose very sight would appall Regina, and whose extreme boldness and malignity would assuredly instigate her to present herself before the bride."

"But what, then, is the ground of such malignity, and how could one so degraded be in any manner related to one so beautiful, so angelic, as was Constance, judging by your description of her, as well as by a portrait I saw and missed the same night from the walls of my chamber, and which I now suspect to have been hers."

"Yes—it was hers—old Nell stole it that night. She had long wanted the small personal effects of Constance, and had watched her opportunity of getting into the closed chamber. You left your door unlocked, and she entered the room, rifled the bureau, and carried off the portrait, and had returned, it is likely, to rob you, when a slight sound of her steps attracted Wolfgang, who happened not to have retired, but was in the next

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room. He followed her into your chamber the last time, and arrested her at your bedside. You asked me the cause of Nell's malignity, and expressed astonishment at the idea of her relationship to Constance. She is, really, no blood-relation to Constance or my children.

She was the step-daughter of Constance's father, and hence the claim to relationship, hence her presumption to a high degree of notice and favor, even while her extreme deformity and her disgusting habits and vices, made her very presence in the meanest capacity insufferable; and hence her envy, hatred, and demoniac malignity. She openly said and swore among her fellows that she would 'kiss her pretty niece.' Upon the night, therefore, that the bridal party was expected, we locked her up in her remote cabin, charging old John with her custody. She escaped, and concealed herself, evidently with the object of seeking and insulting the bride. This gave me only uneasiness, for I supposed Regina at least knew our position; but it filled Wolfgang, who knew, and his brother and sister, who had lately discovered, the illusion under which your unhappy sister had given her hand in marriage, with consternation. While we were seeking the hag else-

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where, she had effected her entrance to the house, and found her way to Mrs. Wallraven's presence! You were there! You know better than myself what followed. It is necessary to repeat, however, that there, for the first time, I discovered the concealment that had been used toward the ill-fated lady. I have nothing more to tell. If I have sinned against the conventional usages of the society in which I was born and lived, my whole life has been one long and terrible expiation."

I took his hand and pressed it, and silently withdrew from the room.

In the course of a week, I discovered that there was no one who possessed the least moral control over the maniac girl except Constantia. Mr. Wallraven prayed that she should remain at Hickory Hall, when I talked of removing her. In truth, the change from their affectionate though sorrowful care, to that of a lunatic asylum, would have been a most unfortunate one for the victim. She had the best medical advice that the country could produce, or wealth could purchase. For more than a year, her malady has constantly increased until it has left her the ruin you see.

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I, also, Mary, was nearly blighted when you met, pitied, loved me.

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The reading of the manuscript had occupied the whole night. It was sunrise when I folded it up, and began to make my simple morning toilet. Before this was completed a low tap was heard at the door, and, to my "come in," Mary entered, apparently just returned from her nightly visit.

She sat down by the fire.

"You have been to see Regina Fairfield, at Hickory Hall," said I.

"Yes," she replied.

"And she—"

"Died at one this morning—died in her senses—reason had returned at the approach of dissolution. She died forgiving all who had had a hand in her betrayal and wreck, and praying forgiveness for herself. She died upon Constantia's bosom."

We attended the funeral of Regina Fairfield, which was conducted with great simplicity. We left Cedar Cliffs soon after. Upon our return from Virginia we lost sight of the Wallravens of Hickory Hall for many years. We heard frequently by letter from Mary Fairfield, and knew

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that the health and spirits of Ferdinand were gradually improving. In one of her letters to me, Mary mentioned that old Mr. Wallraven had sold the property of Hickory Hall, and left the State, accompanied by his two children. This was the first and last time that Mary ever mentioned them in any of her letters.

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# THE BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE AGREEMENT.

"THAT's easy enough."

"*Is* it!"

"Of course it is. Besides, deuce take it, I always *do* speak the truth."

"*Do* you!"

"Why, certainly I do! Do you mean to insinuate that I don't?"

"Oh, no! by no means! There, you see I do not always speak the truth when it would be *rude*——"

"Blewitt? I do believe that you mean to question my veracity! And I won't stand that from any man!"

"*Or dangerous*," pursued Blewitt, without heeding the interruption.

"What the mischief do you mean? I feel as



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if there was something in your talk at which I ought to take offence."

"Then don't, my dear Morris! I mean to say, if you *always* speak the truth you are a miracle of morality; I had almost said a monster of iniquity!"

"I never told a falsehood in my life; I have spoken the truth from my childhood up;" said Morris, growing red in the face.

"Good Lord! he has not the remotest idea of how fast he is lying now!" thought Blewitt to himself.

"Falsehood!" continued Morris, warming with the theme—"why, falsehood is the lowest, the meanest, the most degrading, the—the—the——"

"Oh yes, we know all that; but it is a necessary evil."

"And truth—Divine truth—is the most lovely, the most beautiful, the most elevating——"

"*Ex*-actly! Yet if this lovely, this beautiful, this elevating truth was to prevail for one day in London, there would be—such a go as never was!"

"Blewitt, you shock me."

"Yes, but truth would shock the earth. Why, the destruction of Jerusalem, the sack of Rome,

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the Reign of Terror, would be child's play to the horrible hubbub there would be in this world if the truth were spoken for one day! It would be confusion, distraction, perdition, and chaos come again!"

"Blewitt, I never will believe the world so bad as that—never!" exclaimed Morris, earnestly.

"The Bible says it is—and I know it is—so wicked so deceitful, and so self-deceiving, that it could not bear the light of truth for a single instant; for when that full light of truth is poured upon the world—the Day of Judgment will have come, for this earth will be no longer habitable."

"Blewitt, I cannot agree with you; I do not believe in your theory."

"Well, test it, my dear fellow—test it in your own little orbit of duty. Speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, for one week, or even for one day, and see what will come of it!"

"What *can*?"

"I'll tell you without pretending to be a prophet. If you, Joseph Morris, nephew and heir-apparent of John Morris, retired cheesemonger—betrothed husband of Lizzy Bell, the prettiest girl in Little Britain; head salesman in the great haberdashery establishment of Black,

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Brown, White, and Green—were to dare to tell the truth for one single day, you would be kicked out of your master's shop, discarded by your sweetheart, and disinherited by your uncle; and that if you further persisted in speaking the truth for a week, you would be clapped in a lunatic asylum as a madman too dangerous to be permitted to go at large."

"Good gracious, Blewitt! and do you really believe that I have retained all my present advantages—my uncle's affection, Lizzy's favor, my employers' trust, and my very liberty to boot, only at the price of being habitually false—and that I should forfeit them all in a week by being true?"

"Yes; that's—just—exactly—what I mean."

"I ought to kill you for it!"

"Don't; it would get you into an ugly scrape. Besides it would be much wiser to test the facts; and, moreover, I would like myself to see the experiment tried. Come, now, to make it more interesting, I will lay you a wager—"

"Betting is the fool's argument; I never bet."

"Not even at the Derby?"

Morris was silent; but to do him justice, the



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all-licensing carnival of the Derby was the only exception to the rule.

"Then, as you never bet—except at the Derby—I will not tempt you to do so; but I wish to see the thing tried, and therefore I will tell you what I'll do.—If you will give me your word of honor to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, for one whole day, and if you keep your word by doing so for one day, without forfeiting all the advantages I have named, and if you persevere in doing so for one week without getting put into a lunatic asylum, why, at the end of the given time, I will pay you down five hundred pounds damages for having wronged you, although I am not rich."

"But I don't want you to give me five hundred pounds."

"Or I'll take a thrashing from you for the same cause, although I am the biggest."

"But I don't want to give you a thrashing."

"Oh, well; if you'll neither give nor take, I will bribe you in another way; I will promise never to let my eyes wander towards pretty Lizzy Bell's pew, although that is my principal pleasure in going to church."

"I take you up at that!"

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"It is a bargain, then?"

"Yes; but mind, by speaking the truth for a day—as, indeed, I always do—I do not mean to say that I am going about voluntarily to insult everybody by telling them of their little faults, or peccadilloes, or misfortunes."

"Certainly not. You are to answer truly only such questions as are put to you, and such observations as are addressed to you in your daily routine of business or social intercourse with the little world around you."

"That is simple enough. But stop—you are not to go round among our acquaintance, putting them up to asking me awkward questions which it would be painful to answer?"

"On my honor, no! All shall be fair, for I wish the experiment fairly tested. I shall not speak of the subject directly or indirectly to a single soul during the proscribed day nor must you, should you be hard up, spoil all by saying to any one—'Forgive me, for I have taken the pledge to speak the truth for a day.'"

"Certainly not. I should never under any circumstances make an apology for speaking the truth."

"Then we understand each other?"

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"Perfectly. When does my probation begin?"

"At what time do you rise?"

"At seven."

"Then from seven o'clock to-morrow, being Monday, April 1st, you must begin to speak the truth, and if you persevere until Monday, April 8th, you will be comfortably housed in Bedlam, undergoing the refreshing discipline of the strait-jacket and the shower-bath," said Blewitt.

Morris laughed incredulously; and the friends having reached the end of their argument and the corner of the street at the same moment, parted, and went each his own way.

Blewitt and Morris having been schoolmates, neighbors, and friends from boyhood, they were both of the same age—hopeful twenty-five. But Blewitt, the junior partner in a stock broker's firm, was the tallest, handsomest, and richest man of the two, and consequently had seen more of life than his simpler friend.

The origin of the argument with which the chapter opens was this:—The young men had been attending evening service in a Dissenting chapel, in which a highly celebrated popular

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preacher had held forth upon the fearful text that "Liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever."

In his discourse he spared neither rich nor poor, age nor sex, man, woman, nor child, in his fierce denunciation of the daily, universal, crying sin of falsehood. In his notoriously blunt manner and pure Saxon, he told the lords and ladies present, whom curiosity had drawn to hear this modern John Knox, that they lied to each other, to their friends, and to the world; that they lied in their chambers, in their drawing-rooms, and, Heaven help them, even in the church of God! He told the tradesmen and tradeswoman that their business was founded upon falsehood; the professional men that they lived by lying; and the little children that they told falsehoods by signs long before they were able to do so by speech.

He threatened them all with the warmest corner of that warm lake. Near the close of his sermon, the storm of denunciation dissolved in a shower of compassion, and with tears in his eyes, he implored his hearers "to reform" this sinful habit "altogether," to make a beginning; to try, by the grace of God, to speak the truth, if only

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for a week—for a day—and see how much better it would be!

The congregation had left the church, making various comments upon this extraordinary sermon.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TEST.

"The truth shall make you free."

Joseph Morris lived in Little Britain, with his bachelor uncle and maiden aunt, Mr. John and Mrs. Mary Morris, of whom it need only be said, that they were ordinary specimens of elderly man and womanhood in their own class; fat as most persons are between fifty and sixty; good-humored when nobody crossed them; kind to their nephew when he pleased them, and otherwise when he did otherwise. They had retired before Joseph returned from chapel that Sunday night, and so he went immediately up to his chamber in the third-floor front, and to bed, and to sleep, without ever dreaming of the troubles that might be in store for him.

He arose the next morning at his usual hour,

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dressed, and went down to the breakfast-parlor, where he found his aunt making breakfast, and his uncle reading the morning paper.

"Good morning, aunt! good morning, uncle! how do you do this morning?"

"Ah, good morning, Joe! hearty! hearty how are you?"

"Very well, I thank you, sir," was on Joe's lips, but feeling that he had the headache, and knowing that he was pledged to abstain from conventional falsehoods, he answered truly—

"I am not well, sir; I have a headache."

"What! headache at your age? God bless my soul alive! what are the young men of the present day made of? Why, at your age I did not know I *had* a head, except when it required combing! And even now! look at me now, how stout and well I look!"

"Yes, sir," was on Joseph's tongue; but he remembered that he must reply truthfully to every observation addressed to him, and so he answered—

"I do not think you look well at all, sir!"

"Eh?"

"I do not think you look well."

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"The devil! what do you mean? why don't look well, sir? tell me *that!*"

"Because you are too fat, too short-necked, too full-faced, and—and——"

"Apopletic you mean to say, sir?"

"Yes, uncle."

"By George?" exclaimed the shocked and indignant old man.

"Oh, Joseph, what *do* you mean by saying such shocking things?" cried his aunt in consternation.

"He asked me questions and I told him the truth," replied the young man.

"Yes, and I believe that he wishes that I was dead!" exclaimed the old man.

"No, uncle; I do not. I should be sorry, that is, reasonably sorry, if you should die."

"*Reasonably* sorry! And I suppose you would be reasonably glad of the fat legacy you expect to get from me!"

"Yes sir."

"By George!" cried the old man, jumping up and trotting up and down the floor—"he gets worse and worse! he adds insult upon insult with perfect recklessness. You sir, answer me! what the d——l do you mean by such conduct?" he

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demanded suddenly stopping in front of his nephew, and trembling with suppressed anger.

"I mean to tell the truth without fear or favor."

"You—you unnatural! ungrateful! graceless —*ah!*" sputtered the old man, shaking with fury.

"Oh, Joseph, what makes you behave in such a shocking manner! What have we done to deserve it?"

"I am only telling the truth, aunt."

"You *know* you don't mean what you say!"

"Yes, I do, aunt!"

"You *don't*, you know you'd be inconsolable if I or your good uncle were to die."

"No, I shouldn't, aunt!"

"*Ah!* you unnatural monster, you mean to kill us!" shrieked Mrs. Mary Morris, throwing herself into a chair, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, and bursting into tears.

"No, I don't mean to kill you, aunt! I only said I shouldn't be inconsolable if you and uncle were to die; and of course I shouldn't; no young man ever breaks his heart because his aunt and uncle die."

"Ah! you cold-blooded young villain, you

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freeze my blood!" sobbed the poor woman with hysterical passion.

"Let him alone, Molly! Say no more to him!" cried the old man, dropping into a chair and wiping his crimsoned and perspiring face—"say no more to him—we have nourished a viper in our bosoms to sting us to death at last! But he is our dead brother's only son, and so for poor Joe's sake, if he will take back his words and say he is sorry for having uttered them, I will forgive him."

"Take back your words, my dear; say you did not mean it; your old aunty knows you didn't, herself," said Mrs. Mary, removing her handkerchief from her eyes, and looking pitifully at the young man.

"But I *did* mean it, aunt; and I cannot take my words back, because they were true."

"Then get out of my house, sir! you shall not remain in it another instant! And as for the rest, I will go this day and alter my will! I will cut you off with a shilling, sir, and I will leave all my property, barring a life annuity, to your aunt, to found a hospital for homeless cats! I will, sir! Come! move, sir; tramp! get out of my house!" exclaimed the old man, maddened with rage, and

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rushing upon his nephew, as though he would have expedited his exit with the toe of his boot.

"Not till he's had his breakfast, I beg of you, John! It's bad going out on a raw morning with a fasting stomach."

"Breakfast! he should not eat another mouthful in this house if he was starving," shouted the old man in a fury.

Tears started to Joseph's eyes; he longed to throw himself into his aunt's lap, or around his uncle's neck, as he had been used to do whenever he got into disgrace in his rather naughty boyhood; but then he was pledged not to explain or apologise in telling the truth. So he only took his hat, and with a "Good-bye, uncle; good-bye aunt," he left the house.

"An ungrateful, unnatural young monster!" roared the irate old man, in such a frantic rage as we can only get into with those we love.

"The cold-blooded young villain! He nearly froze my blood!" sobbed the old lady.

"My dead brother's only son to turn out so! Ugh! ugh! ugh!" choked the old man.

"It is enough, it is, to make poor Joe's bones rattle in his grave!" wept Mrs. Mary.

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"What the d——l did he mean by such an attack upon us?" demanded Mr. John.

"I don't know," responded Mrs. Mary, in despair; but, poor fellow! perhaps, after all, he isn't right in his head! he said he had the headache, and he certainly acted very strange—which I noticed he looked queer about the eyes when he came down-stairs," said the poor old woman, drawing boldly upon her imagination for the last-mentioned symptom.

"Did you, though?" inquired the old man, turning around briskly.

"*Yes I did*, and I shouldn't wonder if his poor head was agoing, dear boy! And it's all along of his measuring out endless yards of ribbon and lace, and talking endless rubbish to get them off all day long; and poring over everlasting rows of figures in them fetched ledger-books all night. There's just where it is; and it'll be a pretty set out if you have gone and turned your poor luny nephew out o' doors."

"Pooh! nonsense! he was no more luny than you or myself. It was his natural depravity cropping out, that's what it was, and I'll have nothing more to do with him!" exclaimed old John, relapsing into a rage.

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"Well you'll see. He *is* luny! If he hadn't o'been he'd never said nothing to hurt our feelings. He never did before!" sobbed the old woman.

"I'll disinherit him! and he shall never darken my doors again!" persisted the old man.

"And here endeth the first lesson!" sighed poor Joseph to himself as he took his dejected way toward his place of business. "I have scarcely begun to speak the truth for one hour before I am turned out of doors and disinherited—Ah! I beg your pardon, Miss Robinson!"

In the absorption of his mind he had run afoul of a stout woman, who came sailing along like a frigate under full canvas, with her expansive hoops, crinoline, and flounces filling up the whole breadth of the pavement.

"He! he! he! whatever could you have been thinking of, Mr. Morris?" giggled the woman.

"Of my aunt and uncle, Miss Robinson," said Joseph, letting his eyes roll abstractedly over her showy person.

"Your haunt and huncle! la, what a dutiful nephew! But—he! he! he!—you are looking at my bonnet; now aren't you?"

"Yes."

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"He! he! he! well, since you are so candid, how do you like it?"

"Very well in itself—not at all on you."

"Why so, sir, pray?"

"Because it doesn't suit you."

"And why not, I should like to know? Now tell me candidly, as I know you've got a deal of taste."

"Then, candidly, I think the bonnet too light for such a heavy woman, too young for such an old woman, and too fine for any waiting-woman."

"Pray, how do you know anythink about my age, sir?" exclaimed the indignant Miss Robinson, reddening violently.

"By three sure tokens; the stoutness of your figure, the thinness of your hair, and the weakness of your eyes; these symptoms, taken all together, are infallible proofs of age."

"Mr. Morris you hinsult me, sir."

"Miss Robinson, I did not wish to do so; but you asked my opinion, and I gave it to you truthfully."

"You as much as said I was a stout, bold waiting-woman sir, overdressed."

Something like it, I admit."

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"You are a hintolerable, himperent, hignorant fellow!" exclaimed the irate abigail, bouncing off.

"There, now," said Joseph to himself, "I've made another enemy by answering truthfully the questions that are put to me—an enemy of Helen Lyle's waiting-woman, too, whom I would not have offended for the world! For the world! humph! It is well I did not utter that aloud, for it was a fib. I *would* offend her for the world, though I wouldn't for a mere trifle. Oh, this habit of fibbing! When we don't fib to others, we fib to ourselves though there's no need of it. But confound this telling of the truth! It is likely to get me into more scrapes than I shall ever get out of. I wish people wouldn't make any inquiries of me, or address any observations to me for one day. We boys used to say when we didn't want to tell each other any thing unpleasant, 'Ax me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies.' I wish I had the right to say to all inquirers, 'Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no truths!' Confound this truth-telling, I say again, though I need not say it, as the whole place is likely to be confusion worse confounded before I've done telling the truth."

The end of this soliloquy brought Joseph

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Morris to the fine plate-glass fronted establishment of Messrs. Black, Brown, Green, and White, drapers and out-fitters.

Meanwhile Miss Robinson, in a red rage, rushed on and bustled in upon every acquaintance she had among the tradespeople in Little Britain, asking—

"Hisn't there something very *hodd* about that impudent fellow, Morris, him at Black's. I was hat the shop this morning to give an horder for Miss Lyle, and has I was coming hout I met 'im hin the street, where he behaved most improperly."

"La, Miss Robinson, and he such a modest-looking young man," said the milliner, who happened to be the first person addressed.

"Modest or not, 'e hinsulted me most grossly, and I believe 'e was very much hintoxicated."

"La! and he such a steady young man, and this so early in the morning."

"Then 'e was hevidently out of his 'ead!" exclaimed the abigail, reddening with anger.

"Good gracious me, Miss Robinson, how did he insult you? whatever did he say or do?"

"I leaves you to imagine, ma'am," replied the abigail, with a flaming face, flouncing out of the

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shop, for she had no idea of repeating Joseph's plain truths to her own disparagement.

And the pretty little milliner stood in perfect consternation at the implied fact that the handsome young salesman had had the shocking bad taste to make love to a big, flaunting, middle-aged waiting-woman, who confounded her H's."

"And goodness gracious me, he *must* have been out of his head, sure enough," she said, as she resumed her duties behind the counter.

This conversation was, with little variation, repeated at, at least, a dozen shops. And so, by the diligent rolling of the ball, in the course of two hours at least one-half of his acquaintances in Little Britain were sure that there was something wrong about that poor young fellow Morris.

## CHAPTER III.

### TRUE TO PRINCIPLE.

MEANWHILE Joseph Morris entered the fine front shop of his employers.

"Mr. Morris," said the junior partner, advancing to meet him, "You are late; but I have no



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wish to find fault with one who is generally so punctual as yourself. Here, I wish you to see these choice brocades and moirès carefully packed. They are to be sent down to Streatham to Miss Lyle for examination this evening. And I should be particularly obliged if you would go down yourself with the parcel. It is no part of your business, I know, but we don't like to trust so valuable a parcel to our new shop-boy. And besides, it would look like attention for you to go down; and she is one of our most profitable customers. Her woman was in here this morning, and gave an extensive order, and desired these silks to be sent down for her mistress to look at this afternoon. So if you have no objection I should be especially obliged to you to go with them."

"I will go with great pleasure, sir," answered Joseph, with a beaming countenance, delighted, perhaps, to be able to make an answer at once truthful and polite.

Poor boy! he had begun to fear that he was never to open his mouth without giving offence or making an enemy.

"That's like you, you are very obliging. And do you know, you good-looking young dog, that I think she would like you to go down to her villa:

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I have noticed that when she comes to the shop herself she always likes you to serve her; and if one of us old fogies of the firm go to wait on her to show our respect, she looks bored, and doesn't like anything we show her, and gets up and says she will call again. Ah, you young scapegrace, it's a fine thing to be five-and-twenty, with nice auburn hair and whiskers!" said Mr. Brown, passing his hand over his own shining ivory pate.

Joseph Morris reddened with the ingenuous blush of modest young manhood, as he answered truthfully—

"Yes, it is."

The partner looked up in mild surprise at this very candid reply, saying to himself—

"The conceited young puppy! Is he as vain as all that? Yet no, he cannot be, for he is blushing now at the imputation of being admired by an heiress! I must have misunderstood him. Then speaking up, he said—

"And I have something else to tell you, Morris, and, mind, it is a secret yet. Come this way."

The young man followed his principal to a covert behind some hanging shawls, and continued—

"You see, I wish to have the pleasure of tell

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ing you the first myself, and, as I am going down to Paisley to buy goods this morning, I shall not have another opportunity."

Joseph looked interested and curious. Mr. Brown glanced around to see that there were no eavesdroppers, and continued—

"Well, you see, on Saturday night, partners and self were having a snug little supper together at the 'Angel and Gridiron'—rum name for a tavern, isn't it?"

"It is a queer combination of subjects," replied the young man.

"And not so queer neither, for I am sure, if my cook would always send me up such juicy, well-broiled steaks and chops as we get there, I should call her an angel *at* the gridiron! Ha, ha, ha! good, that, though I got it off myself—isn't it?"

"Not so very" answered the truth-teller.

"What does he mean?" asked Mr. Brown of himself; "I don't understand him this morning; he is certainly queer."

But being too much interested in the matter he had to communicate to fly off after any collateral subject, he passed it by, and continued—

"Well, as I was saying, we were all snugly

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seated at supper in a private room of the Angel and Gridiron, when we began to talk of you—of your intelligence and fidelity, and pleasing manners, and popularity among the ladies, and—a—a—in short, we thought it would be the right thing to take you into the firm, and give you a fair share of the business."

"Oh, Mr. Brown!" burst forth the young man in a fervor of gratitude and delight.

To be made a member of the firm at some far distant day, after years of faithful service and careful saving, had been the goal of his loftiest earthly ambition; but to be taken in now, without capital, merely upon account of his personal worth, was rapture.

"Hush! don't break out in that way; you'll be overheard, and the affair is a dead secret as yet. There, the shop is half full of customers, and we must bring our conversation to an end. Yes, you see Black is going to retire altogether from business, and I shall be the senior partner."

"I wish you joy, sir."

"Yes, and congratulate yourself, too, for I think I shall make a kinder master than our rather tyrannical head, Black. But, at all events, after the first of May proximo, the firm will be styled,

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'Brown, Green, White, and Morris,' if you raise no objection."

"Oh, Mr. Brown, my heart——"

"Yes, I know—I know. Well, that's the secret. Now, you know the others wish to surprise you, therefore you are not to go and say that I told you."

"No, not unless they ask me."

"Oh, they are not going to do that; they will be mum until the time comes. And now I am off to Scotland; and you had better go and attend to those ladies looking at the prints."

So Mr. Brown departed, and the young man took his accustomed place behind the counter to wait upon the customers.

"You are sure, now, that these colors will not fade?" inquired a young lady, examining a neat cotton print.

"No, miss, I am sure they will fade," replied the truth-teller.

"But they are ticketed 'fast colors,' so how do you know they will fade?"

"Because an old lady bought a dress of them last week, and washed a piece, which faded quite out, and she came here on Saturday and made a noise about it."

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"I should think she might; but you ought not to ticket prints 'fast colors,' unless you are quite sure that they are so."

"No, miss, I know we ought not."

"And now that you have found out they fade you should take the ticket off."

"Yes, miss, I know we should."

"What, are not those tickets taken off yet?" exclaimed the junior partner White, coming up in a great bustle. "Take them off at once, Mr. Morris. We never warrant any colors but what we *know* to be fast. What else can we show you, miss?" he inquired, turning deferentially to the young lady.

"Nothing, thank you; I will call again," said the young lady, gently bowing herself out of the shop.

As soon as she was gone, the whole manner of the proprietor changed. Turning sharply round to Morris, who was engaged in tearing off the "fast colors" tickets from the fady prints, he said, harshly—

"Let those tickets be! What the deuce possessed you to tell Miss Simpson that the colors would fade?"

"Because it was true. Old Mrs. Rubb, who

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bought a dress of it last week, on the strength of those tickets, brought back a piece of it washed out to a browny white."

"But you needn't have told Miss Simpson that. You ought to have left her to find it out for herself after she had bought and paid for the dress."

"But that would have been too late, sir."

"What of that? We must sell our goods, I suppose? Whereas, if we go to let people know that this piece of goods will fade, and that will fray, and t'other cut out, we had better put up our shutters at once. I'm astonished that you should have been in our employ so long without knowing better than to act as you have done. Be careful not to make such mistakes in future," and so saying, Mr. White stalked off.

Poor Joseph, he had scarcely drawn his breath after this blowing up, before his truth and courage were put to a fresh trial.

"Show me some good cheap flannels, like them marked up at the window—'Real Welsh, all wool, elevenpence three farthings a yard,'" said an old lady, coming up to the counter.

With a sigh at the prospective cross-examination, and a hearty hope that the old lady might

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take every thing for granted, and ask no questions, Joseph took down a roll of flannel, and displayed it before her.

"Now is this just the same as that in the window?"

"It is just the same sort of goods."

"And is it real Welsh?"

"N—n—o, mum; it is not."

"Isn't it?—but it is marked so in the window! Hows'ever it feels like a good bit of flannel; and it's all wool?"

"No, mum; it is slightly mixed with cotton."

"Mixed with cotton! Why it's marked 'All Wool' in the window! what makes you put things in the window that ain't true? Hows'ever, it *do* feel like a good bit of flannel, for all that, and cheap enough at the price, if it do not shrink badly. Will it, do you think?"

"Yes, mum, very badly."

"La! how do you know?'

"Because my aunt bought some to make up for herself, and it shrank so badly that she said it was fit for nothing but scouring-cloths."

"La! well, it was very honest in you to tell me so, else I should ha' been taken in," said the old lady, rising to depart.

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"I can show you some genuine Welch flannel, really all wool, and warrant not to shrink much, at a higher price, mum," said the young man, trying to stop her progress.

"No, I thank you; I think I'll go over the way," replied the old lady, evidently afraid of being "taken in."

The face of Mr. Black, who overheard this conversation, was crimson with anger. Hastening after the departing customer, he exclaimed—

"It was all a mistake, mum, about those flannels; the tickets were put upon the wrong goods, I assure you. I ordered my young men to rectify the error immediately, but I suppose they neglected it; it shall, however, be done instantly. In the meantime, if you will step back, we can show you——"

"Oh, no, I thank you," hastily exclaimed the old lady, hurrying out of the shop.

"There! now you've done it again," muttered Mr. Black, in a low, enraged voice, close to the ear of Joseph. Have you taken leave of your senses this morning? Why should you tell that lady that the flannel wasn't Welsh, wasn't all wool, and would shrink badly?"

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Because she asked me, and I had to answer her the truth."

"Truth be ——!" exclaimed the proprietor, in a voice of suppressed fury. But at this moment a party of ladies advanced toward Joseph, and his principal retreated to recover his composure.

"Now, are those *real* French silks?" inquired one of the ladies, examining what was trying to pass muster for glacé.

"N—n—o, madam," faltered Joseph, blushing up to his eyes.

"But they are labelled genuine French silks, though I had my doubts about it, too; but why do you label them thus, if they are not so? But it is a mistake, I suppose?" said the lady interrogatively.

"No, madam, it was not."

"What! you don't mean to say that it was done on purpose?"

"Yes, madam."

"Why do you put false labels on your goods?"

"To sell them at a better price, madam."

"But that is cheating!" cried the lady, in a shocked voice.

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"I know it, madam," the truth-teller was forced to admit.

"And is this the practice of your shop?"

"Yes, madam, and of many other shops."

"Shocking! And—but why do you expose these things? Have you quarrelled with your employers?"

"No madam! I never was in higher account with them than at present."

"Extraordinary! But why, then, do you dare tell me these things?"

"Because you ask me questions, madam, which I feel compelled to answer truthfully."

"Wonderful! And do you always tell the truth?"

"I do now, madam."

"And do your employers know of it?"

"I think not, madam."

"I should think not, indeed!"

"But now about these silks falsely labelled French. I should like to know what they really are?"

"English silks, of rather inferior quality."

"And what is their real worth in retail?"

"About two shillings a yard."

"And you sell them for three shillings! a third

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more than their value! Monstrous! I never will enter this shop, and I shall certainly let all my friends know how they are taken in," said the lady, dropping the silks, and departing.

This scene was witnessed not only by the panic-stricken Black, but by White and Green, who stood in consternation for a minute after the lady had left the shop; and then all three made a simultaneous rush upon Joseph, exclaiming in a breath—

"What the d—— do you mean, sir?"

"Are you mad? Do you wish to ruin us?"

"You are driving away every customer out of the shop. You are costing us a hundred pounds an hour, if a penny."

"Why the d—— do you act in this insane manner?"

"I am asked questions, and I tell the truth," answered Joseph, driven to desperation by this storm of invective.

"Truth! What the d—— do you mean by that? you say our labels are false!"

"You say we put false tickets on our goods, to sell them at a better price!" said Green.

"And that it is the practice of our establishment!" said White.

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"Well, it is the truth! the truth! the truth and I must speak the truth, if I die for it!" cried Joseph wildly.

"Get out of our shop, you villain!" roared Black.

"Begone, you scoundrel!" thundered Green.

"Never show your face inside of our doors again!" shouted White.

"Go!" stormed all three.

The time had come. Joseph took his hat, caped lightly over the counter, and stopping only to snatch the parcel consigned to his care by Brown, vanished from the shop.

"Well," thought Joseph Morris, as he found himself in the street, with the parcel under his arm, "I have spoken the truth for six hours only, and without any other fault than that, I find myself disinherited and turned out of doors by my uncle, and disgraced and driven from the shop of my employers! Will the rest follow? Will sweet Lizzie Bell discard me for telling her some unpleasant truth? And will terrified and indignant society send me to Bedlam as a madman too dangerous to be at large?"

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SUSPECTED OF LUNACY.

"It's gude to be merry and wise,
It's gude to be honest and true,
It's gude to be off with the auld love
Before ye be on wi' the new."

"I HAD better make a compact with the Evil One—so much temporal prosperity for so much eternal perdition—than this agreement with Blewitt to speak the truth for a week! Now, where shall I bend my steps? Turned out of my uncle's house, and driven from my employer's shop, what shall I do? The sooner I finish it all up and get into Bedlam the better. There, at least, I shall have board, lodging and attendance. There I shall not be kicked out for telling the truth; quite the contrary, for the more truth I speak, the longer they will keep me, for the madder they will think me. Bedlam for my money! —and Bedlam for ever! But in the meantime, what the deuce am I to do?" thought Joseph Morris, as he stood looking up and down the street.

"Give a poor man a penny, sir," suggested a miserable looking tramp at his elbow.

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"No; don't see it: I'm a poor man myself," said Joseph.

"Out of work, sir."

"Serves you right; so am I."

"It was not my fault, sir."

"I'm another; 'twasn't mine."

"Wife and fifteen small children, sir, mostly twins, 'specially the three last, sir."

"Then you possess more than I do, so how dare you beg from me? Be off with yourself."

"Please, sir, all down with the measles."

"Then I shouldn't like to catch it; get away," said Joseph, who, having refused the beggar a penny, tossed him a crown, and then made the best of his own way to the Angel and Gridiron, to find "his warmest welcome at an inn." He engaged a room, where he deposited his parcel to remain until the evening, and went to call upon his betrothed.

Lizzie Bell was the niece of a thriving milliner in the next street, and the heiress presumptive of the shop, the business and the savings. She was a little fair-skinned, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed, yellow-haired lump of a girl, always dressed out as an advertisement to the shop. Her business was to sit in the show-room, exhibit fashions, and

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wheedle customers until her aunt should be at leisure to receive orders. She had a fair knowledge of trade, and a sharp eye to the main chance. Otherwise, her intellect was shallow, and her education superficial.

She had been engaged for about a year to Joseph Morris, who, as head clerk of Brown, Black, Green, and White, and heir of old John Morris, was considered quite a catch for girls of her class. So Miss Lizzy Bell had angled for him, and caught him; and Mr. Joseph Morris, being good-natured and obliging, had easily suffered himself to be taken. The scene of the said man-fishing had been the shop of Messrs. B., B., G., and W., where Miss Lizzie was in the habit of going to purchase goods. And now they were betrothed, and the marriage was fixed to come off on the first of the ensuing month.

Joseph was so very fond of her that he quite mistook her personal appearance for her very self, and supposed her soft, round, white form, and blue eyes to indicate an affectionate disposition, her dullness to be good temper, and her lumpish immobility to prove constancy and domesticity. He had not even begun to suspect that all this in her meant simply indolence, selfishness, and sensu-



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ality. He was now on his way to confide to her "tender and faithful bosom" his own great troubles.

She received him as usual in the little front drawing-room over the shop, and adjoining the show-room, where she daily sat among lace curtains, tidies, and other gossamer draperies, like a pretty little spider in an elegant little web, to exhibit enticing fineries and entangle feminine flies.

She was dressed in a redundancy of pink flounces, that made her resemble a large cabbage-rose in full bloom. She was seated near the centre-table, and engaged in copying a Parisian pattern bonnet that hung upon a little pole before her.

There was no one else in the room when Joseph entered.

"So you have come at last," she said, without rising to receive him.

"Yes," he replied, wearily sinking into a chair.

"I hope you had a pleasant visit with your friend, Miss Robinson, last evening."

"I was at chapel," replied Joseph, looking up in surprise. "I was anxious to hear Mr. Spurgeon——"

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"Oh, yes; and to wait on Miss Robinson. I believe it is mostly shop-boys and servant-girls that go to hear that ranter."

"I do not clearly understand you, Lizzy. Mr. Spurgeon is no ranter, and his hearers are composed of all classes, from the nobility and gentry down to the news-boys and street-sweepers."

"To say nothing of Miss Robinson."

"Why do you reiterate a waiting-woman's name to me in this manner, Lizzy? You seem to be angry with me without a cause. What is the matter?"

"Ah, *I* know of your carryings on; you need not think I don't! *I* hear of you!"

"Lizzy, you meet me with undeserved reproaches this morning, when I am in peculiar need of comfort——"

"Oh! I suppose you are! I suppose you have offended Miss Robinson, have you not, now?"

"Yes."

"There, I knew it! Well, you needn't come to me for comfort: you better go and make it up with your lady's waiting-woman."

"Lizzy, you insult me!" exclaimed the young man, in such an angry tone, and with such a crimson brow, that the flippant girl became

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alarmed. She had not credited one word of the story hinted to her by Jane Robinson, though she had acted upon it to gratify her love of giving pain. So now, holding out her hand to him, she said—

"Well, if you haven't been paying attention to a lady's-maid, I had a good right to think you had. The woman was in here this morning in a towering passion, and said you had been making love to her!"

"Said that I had been——"

"Well, if she didn't say it, she hinted it."

"What did she say?"

Lizzy told him.

"And now I will relate what really did pass," said Joseph, and thereupon he described the scene between himself and Robinson.

Lizzy laughed heartily. She was malicious enough kneely to enjoy the discomfiture of the abigail. When her fit of laughter was over, she wiped the tears from her eyes, looked up, and inquired—

"But what possessed you to tell her that?"

"Because she asked me, and I had to answer truly."

"But my good gracious alive, the truth is not

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to be told at all times; 'tisn't prudent. Now, you've made a mortal enemy of Miss Lyle's confidential attendant, and she'll go and persuade her mistress not to deal at your shop—or mine either, perhaps."

"I think it quite likely, indeed, Lizzy. And that is not the only scrape I have got into this morning either," sighed the young man.

"That is quite enough; but what else?"

Joseph related the breakfast scene between himself and his relatives that ended in his expulsion from their house.

"And so, dear Lizzy," he concluded, "because in answer to an observation that was made to me, I admitted that I should not be quite inconsolable if my aunt and uncle were to die, and that the legacy I expected from him would help to comfort me for their loss, he has turned me out of doors, and disinherited me!"

Lizzy did not laugh now. She was quite sensible of the pecuniary damage she herself, as Joseph's wife, might sustain in the loss of that inheritance. Her face flushed deeply with displeasure at this loss; but she took up the tone of virtuous indignation, as she answered—

"And served you right, too! for indeed I must

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say it was very undutiful, and cruel, and unnatural in you, to say such things to your uncle and aunt—and such a rich uncle, too! and you his only nephew! I don't know what could have possessed you. Why did you say them?"

"Because I was asked questions, and had to answer truly, as I told you before."

"And as *I* told *you* before, the truth is not to be spoken at all times; and in this case it was downright *wicked* to speak the truth—to such a wealthy relative, too! Why, when my aunt says to me—'La! Lizzy, my dear, whatever would you do if you were to lose me?' I don't answer her—'A great deal better without you, aunt; for then I should have everything all to myself,' although that would be the truth;—because, if I did, she would turn me out of doors, and serve *me* right! No; I answer—'La, aunt! don't talk so; you break my heart. If you were to die I should cry my eyes out, and pine myself into the grave in a month.'"

"And does she believe you?"

"She believes that at least I think so, and that I am sincere in what I say; and so she loves me all the more, and saves all the closer for me."

"Lizzy, you revolt me! I could not have

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believed that there was so much insensibility and insincerity in your nature," said the young man, in a mournful voice.

"It is not insincerity—it is prudence, and good nature, and dutifulness to parents—I mean to aunts. And bad as I am, Mr. Virtuous Indignation, I'm not so bad as to hurt the feelings of them that brought me up, and cared for me, as somebody else did," sneered Lizzy.

"I had best tell you the extent of the mischief at once, Lizzy, for the rupture with my uncle is not the only misfortune that has overtaken me this day," said the young man desperately.

"Well, what is the other? You'd as well tell me; I am ready to hear any thing now."

Joseph related to her the events of the morning at his place of business. He ended by saying—

"And so, Lizzy, by merely answering truthfully such questions as have been put to me, I have been driven forth from my employers' office."

"And serves you doubly right! I think you must have been out of your senses!" exclaimed Lizzy, flushing deeply at this double folly, as she would have termed it, at this double ruin, as she felt it to be. "It's enough to ruin your employers' business. I'm sure *I*, for one, shouldn't

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blame them if they were to sue you for slander. *Now* what are you to do?"

"God knows! I do not."

"I know one thing! If you had had the slightest regard for *me*, you would not have acted in such a manner as to bring yourself to beggary within one month of our marriage!"

"Do you blame me for telling the truth?"

"Oh, the truth!" exclaimed Lizzy, in extreme disgust. "Yes, I do blame you! It was sheer madness to tell the truth to your customers. I don't think they have a right to expect it. If I were to tell the truth to our customers, we might go into the Insolvent Court to-morrow. Truth, indeed! I shall sell this bonnet that I am making for double its cost, by swearing it is a Parisian bonnet; well, it is just as good, being made after one. If you want to do business, and get along in this world, you must *shave*. I'm no barber, but I can shave a caution, I tell you!"

"More is the pity," said Joseph, sadly.

"And as for *you*, Mr. Truth-teller, I really do wonder at your sudden conscientiousness. You have told *me* falsehoods enough in your time, Heaven knows!"

"Me! I told you falsehoods!" was upon the



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tip of Joseph's tongue; but suddenly he remembered that often, in the heat of his affection for Lizzy, he had used terms of endearment and admiration that were not warranted by fact. He had, during those fits of temporary insanity, called her his "angel," his "life," his "soul," whereas she was not, and could not be any of these things, but only a pretty little dumpling of a girl, of whom, however, he was very fond. So the truth-teller was obliged to reply—

"Yes, Lizzy, I have told you falsehoods; but I will do so no more."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Lizzy, indignantly. "I suppose, when you said you loved me, you told a falsehood? Well, I declare!"

"No, Lizzy, that was the truth! I *do* love you."

"Oh, you *do*. I should be very thankful for small favors! What do you mean, then, by saying that you have told me falsehoods?"

"I have called you the sweetest darling in the world; and that was false, for you are not such."

"Well, upon my word! Anything else?"

"Yes; I have called you an angel, which of course was not true."

"Humph! What else?"

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"A beauty, a seraph, and my life, and my soul, neither of which you are, dear Lizzy!"

"And you told me that you should die if I didn't marry you; and I suppose *that* was as false as the rest?"

"Yes, Lizzy, it was."

"Well, now, after that last speech, I hope you will take your hat and go!"

"No, dear Lizzy, I shall not. And now you must be content to hear the honest truth. Although you are no angel, nor beauty, you are a very good looking young girl. And though my life actually does not depend upon your constancy, and though your final rejection of me would not quite kill me, still I do love you very dearly, and should feel very sorry if anything were to happen to part us. I mean to be true to you in word and deed, both as a lover and as a husband, said Joseph, seriously.

"Well, really I *ought* to feel flattered! You are very sincere now, at least," sneered the girl.

"I was always so sincere as this—that I never meant to deceive you. Those hyperbolical terms of admiration and endearment, though not literally true, were at their worst only the fond exag-

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gerations of a sincere lover," said Joseph, deprecatingly.

"You never were in love with me, or you are not so now, else you would not think terms hyper—what's its name—which I suppose means too good for me. No, Mr. Morris, it is somebody else you love, not me."

Morris was silent, because he was turning over in his mind a subject that he did not clearly understand—namely, the state of his own heart; —then he replied, truthfully—

"No, Lizzy, there is no one in the world I love as much as yourself."

"You say that very slowly and doubtfully; and I see very well how it is. There is some one you admire more than you do me, and whom you could love better than you love me, if you were free to do so. Now, isn't that the truth?"

The blood rushed to Joseph's face in a crimson flush, and then retreating, left it pale as marble, as in a low, unsteady voice, he replied—

"Lizzy, if you had asked me this question but yesterday, I should have answered 'No,' telling you a pleasant, conventional falsehood; but to-day I speak the stern truth, and answer 'Yes.'"

"Then why don't you take your hat and go, as

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I told you before?" exclaimed the girl, flushed with what we are forced to admit was a very natural indignation.

"Because, Lizzy, I must first reason with you, and then, perhaps, you will understand me better, and not wish me to go. Listen to me, dear Lizzy, for you *are* dear to me; if you were not, I would not call you so! We human creatures are many of us aspiring beings, Lizzy, and apt to look up to that which is excellent, and sigh for that which is unattainable. Lizzy, from boyhood to manhood, I have watched a lovely little girl grow up into a lovely woman; she is beautiful, without vanity; wise, without pedantry; wealthy, without pride; a perfect woman, Lizzy, if ever one lived in this world——"

"Then you had better go and tell her so, and not stand here insulting me with her praises."

"Bear with me, Lizzy! You asked for the truth, and I am giving it to you. This noble woman is not for me; her brow is destined for a coronet, perhaps! I never lowered her by so familiar a thought as that of making her my wife; and therefore, I never dared to love her—"

"I wont stand this any longer! Why, to think that the very proposal of marriage that I

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know you considered quite a compliment to me, you look upon as a wrong and a degradation if offered to her! No, I won't stand it! Here! take back your keeper, and leave the house, sir!" exclaimed the girl, passionately, tearing off her ring and dashing it upon the floor.

"But hear me, Lizzy, and if you understand me, you will see that you have no reasonable cause for jealousy. This noble woman, whom I never, even in imagination, connected with love or marriage, has been to me a guiding star, and has even made me more worthy to become your husband—"

"I don't see it, and I don't thank her!"

"I will explain and you *may* thank her! She was an early school-fellow and playmate of mine, and now, notwithstanding her great change of fortune, I believe she takes a friendly interest in my welfare. Therefore, Lizzy, in many an hour of temptation and danger, the thought of her—the thought that she would hear of my weakness and folly—has saved me from sin and misery. There, Lizzy! that is what that woman has done for me, no more, and no less! Take back your ring, dear Lizzy, and believe that I will be true to you as long as you accept my fidelity," said Joseph, pick-

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ing up the keeper and attempting to replace it upon her finger.

But she sharply slapped his hand off, and threw the ring out of the window; saying—

"No; I won't take any *half* heart, or any second-handed heart either! You may go to your paragon. *I* will never have anything to say to you again. I never *did* think you were worth much, and now I know that you are worth nothing! And worthless as you are in every thing else, you are not even faithful to me! I never did really love you, and now I hate and despise you. So now I hope you'll go before I call a policeman to put you out!"

This was spoken very passionately, but there was a deep viciousness in Lizzy's looks, as well as a fierce acrimony in her words that left no saving doubt on Joseph's mind as to her real meaning or her true character. The latter was a revelation to him. He rose with dignity, and said—

"Good-bye, Lizzy! you are not the Lizzy I supposed you to be! I have been as much deceived in you as you profess to have been in me! Thank Heaven the mistake has been discovered in good time. And thank you, Lizzy, for my restored freedom. Yes; it is a bitter lesson, but

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a wholesome one;" and dashing a few indignant tears from his eyes, the young man turned and left the house.

"There! thank fortune, I have got rid of *him*. Why, now that he is cast off by his uncle, and turned out by his employer, he hasn't even the means of getting his own living! If I were to marry him *now*, I should have to support him! Let him put up with it! and he admiring another woman more than he does me! And I wonder who she is? However, I don't mind. I shall take care to let Mr. Henry Blewitt know that the coast is clear now, for he is no end to the better match of the two!" soliloquised Miss Lizzy, as she seated herself to trim the Parisian bonnet.

Meantime Joseph, brooding over the selfishness, hardness, and duplicity of Lizzy's character, as it had just been revealed to him, wandered thoughtfully away from the milliner's shop. In his deep abstraction he ran plump up against a gentleman advancing from the other end of the street.

"Hey! what the deuce! Joseph! are you really as mad as they say you are, and are you 'running a muck' against all Little Britain?"

"Oh, Blewitt! is that you? I beg your pardon!"

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"I should think you might, after knocking the soul out of my body! how do you get on?"

"Get *on!* I am getting *off*, it appears. Ah, Blewitt! I have not yet told the truth for seven hours, and I am off with my uncle, off with my employers, and off with my sweetheart."

"I told you so! and now if you do not look out sharp, in seven more hours you will be *off* to the lunatic asylum. Your good aunt has been down to your place inquiring after you. The story they told her at Black's you may be certain did not reassure her. She is herself convinced, and has convinced them, that you are entirely out of your head, as she calls it. They are now thoroughly persuaded that your strange conduct this morning was the effect of serious mental derangement. They are all very anxious lest you should do yourself a mischief!"

"And really, I think their anxiety in the last respect well founded! I suppose, in the last seven hours, I have done myself as much mischief as a man possibly could do himself, by simply speaking the truth!" said Joseph dejectedly.

"Shouldn't wonder, my dear fellow. Still the play must be played out. In the meantime, what will you do? All Little Britain is in a stir with

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the news that you have suddenly gone mad. They are searching for you in every direction to put you under restraint and subject you to a medical examination. Now, as you are bound not to give any explanation of your conduct until the end of the day, you must either get out of the way or into Bedlam."

"I shall take my chance," said Joseph, in desperation; "but as I have business down at Streatham, I shall go and attend to that first."

"Then you'd better be off at once, my fine fellow; so I will not detain you. *Au revoir!*" said Blewitt, gaily lifting his hat, and waving it as they separated.

Joseph Morris returned to the Angel and Gridiron, refreshed himself with a chop and a glass of ale, took up his parcel, threw himself into a Streatham omnibus, and started for the Rosery, the beautiful suburban villa of Helen Lyle, the wealthy heiress.

"And now, Helen! — gentle-hearted, noble-minded, pure-spirited Helen—will you, too, discard your old school-fellow for speaking the truth? Shall you ask me trying questions?—must I answer with offensive truths?—and will you expel me with ignominy from your gates?



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Heaven forbid," thought Joseph, as the omnibus rattled along toward Streatham. In due time he was set down at the head of a shady lane, whence a short walk took him to the lovely little wooded vale in which was situated the Rosery.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HEIRESS.

"Ever the right comes uppermost
And ever is justice done."

Helen Lyle, the wealthy proprietress of the Rosery, was the only daughter of the old schoolmaster from whom Joseph Morris had received the "rudiments" of his education. As Dominie Lyle's elementary school had been composed of both boys and girls of a tender age, Helen and Joseph had been schoolmates and classmates from the time that they were mere infants until the year in which Joseph was received as shop-boy in Black, Brown, White and Green's establishment, and Helen was promoted to the assistant teacher's desk in her father's school. And after that they were companions and friends, until one quiet autumn afternoon, when the gentle-spirited old

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master laid down the ferule that he seldom used, dropped his head softly upon his desk, and sank into his last long sleep. After the schoolmaster's death, Helen went out as a daily governess to win her daily bread. And at this thankless task she toiled year after year, until one bitter, bitter winter day, when she returned from her round of duties, chilled, weary, hungry, and faint, to her humble lodgings, she found there a grim-visaged lawyer, with a green bag, anxiously waiting her appearance. Helen's great-uncle, her grandfather's elder brother, had died in New Orleans, and left her half a million of pounds sterling, made in the cotton trade.

And Helen Lyle, the poor, over-worked, ill-paid, daily governess, was, in point of wealth, a match for a duke—in point of worth, she was matchless. Helen was now twenty-two years of age, so that there was no tedious days of minority and guardianship to be lingered out. She entered at once upon her splendid fortune, which she enjoyed with the meekness of a gentle spirit, long disciplined by adversity. Love of the country tempted her to leave London, while attachment to her old friends and neighbors withheld her from going far away; so she purchased a villa at

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Streatham, and invited a needy relative, the wife of a country curate, to live with her.

Helen furnished her house with elegant simplicity, and adopted a style of living many degrees below that to which her real wealth entitled her. This was done in consideration of those old and humble friends and neighbors, to whom she was tenderly attached, whom she constantly invited and entertained at her villa, and whom she did not wish to repel by a show of great disparity in their mutual way of living. The surplus income saved in this manner was devoted to the purposes of charity.

It was quite in vain that ladies of the upper classes who had younger sons to dispose of, or younger brothers to provide for, condescended to "take up" this wealthy city heiress, and endeavored to patronise this *parvenu*. Helen had too much gentle dignity of character to have accepted the mere patronage of a royal duchess. She was perfectly insensible, except through her affections or her conscience.

Helen had been in possession of her fortune three years, and was consequently now twenty-five years of age. Her figure was tall, slender, and elegantly turned. Her pale oval face was shaded

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with dark brown hair, and lighted up by large brown eyes. Her youth of toil and privation had given to her beautiful features and graceful manners an expression of gravity beyond her years.

On this particular afternoon Helen was in the drawing-room alone, when a servant entered, and in a low tone informed her that Mr. Morris had come with a parcel from Black's.

"Show Mr. Morris in here, and take the parcel to Robinson," said Helen.

The servant went out, and in the next moment Mr. Morris was announced.

Helen arose and crossed the whole width of the room to receive him, holding out her hand and saying, with a smile—

"Well! I have been living here three years, and this is the first time you have been to see me. Was that kind of an old friend?"

"Under the circumstances, I think it was, Miss Lyle!" answered the truth-teller.

"But why?" inquired Helen, as she led the way to a sofa, and invited him to be seated.

"The disparity of our conditions, Miss Lyle, would seem to forbid the continuance of our acquaintance."

"Again, why? I do not see the reason."

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"I should be considered an intruder and an alien, Miss Lyle, in the sphere upon which you have entered."

"By whom? not by me," said Helen.

"By the people with whom you are surrounded, Miss Lyle, who might not like to meet in your drawing-room the salesman who waits upon them behind the counter."

"Then they need no do it. They can stay away. I myself am of the city; the money that I have inherited was made in trade; my affections and sympathies are with the people from whom I sprang, and among whom I was brought up. I do not seek acquaintances among the gentry; but if they will seek me, I shall treat them with courtesy; but I shall also expect them to treat with like courtesy the friends of my childhood whom they may meet at my house."

"Miss Lyle, that is nobly said, and like yourself; but I fear it is an impracticable theory. I fear the exigencies of your new position will compel you to drop your old friends."

"Never!" she said. "But why do you call me Miss Lyle? In those old, happy days at my grandfather's little school, it used to be Helen and Joseph. In the after days of trouble, it was still

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Joseph and Helen! Why should it now be Miss Lyle? Do you wish me to call you Mr. Morris?"

"No, no! pray do not! Call me Joseph, I entreat you!" exclaimed the young man, as her color went and came.

"Then let me be Helen, as of old!—your friend Helen. Yes, Joseph, we must be friends! I have neither parents, brother, nor sister in the world, and I—shall never marry. So you and your wife, Joseph, must be like brother and sister to me. I hear that you are soon to be married, and I am glad that you came here this evening, as I have prepared a present for your bride——"

The Marchioness of Montlyon and Lord George Dewbills were announced, and the two visitors entered the room.

Joseph took his hat to withdraw.

"No, don't go yet, I entreat you! This is the first time you have been here. I have seen so little of you, and—I have so much to say to you; pray wait till they are gone," whispered Helen, hastily.

Joseph bowed, and with a throbbing heart, retreated to the other end of the room, and tried to

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employ himself by looking at some fine stereoscopic views.

The marchioness met Helen with much *empressement*, taking her by both hands, and kissing her with every appearance of affectionate interest.

And to Joseph's astonishment—for he could not entirely confine his attention to the stereoscope, or quite avoid observing this interview — Helen seemed pleased and flattered by the condescension.

Lord George was equally attentive to the young lady of the house. They talked of the London season, then at its height; of the Queen's last drawing-room, of balls, concerts, operas recent and approaching, and wondered why Mrs. Cassock and Miss Lyle did not come up to town. The marchioness then left cards for her morning concert at Montlyon House, and soon after, with the same demonstrations of affection, took her leave.

"And now," said Helen, advancing and joining Joseph, "what do you think of *that?*"

"I think," replied the young man, "that the Marchioness of Montlyon must have some *very* important object in view when she condescends come here and be so *very* gracious to Helen."

"That opinion is not very flattering

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any rate," said the lady. "But how do you know that it was not my personal worth that attracted her?"

"Because, Helen, your personal worth, if it had been ten times as great, would not have attracted her ladyship had you remained a daily governess. And you know that quite as well as I do. And even now, greatly as your fortunes are changed for the better, there must be some very important object that brings Lady Montlyon to your house. Marchionesses do not often 'take up' city heiresses, no matter how wealthy the latter may be."

"You are painfully candid! But what object do you suppose her ladyship has in view?"

"Your half million of pounds sterling, to pay the debts of her profligate second son, Lord George Dewbills, whom upon account of his very bad character, even *her* influence has failed to get either into the army, navy, or church. Her ladyship thinks that a city heiress would be glad to endow a broken-down younger son with her large fortune for the sake of being *her* daughter-in-law, and of being called Lady George Dewbills, although the title is one of mere courtesy——"

"But I should be only one remove from the

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coronet, which would be mine in case the elder brother should go off! How do you think I should adorn it?"

"Not at all, Helen."

"Why?"

"Because you are not, as they say, 'to the manner born'—you have not—the—the air, the expression, the—what shall I say?—the indefinable something, the—so to speak—the subtle aroma of high birth around you; that of the daily governess pervades you!"

"Well, really, Mr. Morris, I do not know whether that last speech of yours is more remarkable for its politeness or its perspicuity!" said the astonished girl.

"I know it was not polite! Ah, Helen, the truth seldom is! And I am sure it was not clear, for I tried to define what was really indefinable; but you know what I mean."

"Yes; and if this is true, I wonder you should think that the marchioness could tolerate me as a daughter-in-law."

"Nor would she for her elder son; but for her profligate, penniless, and deeply-embarrassed younger one, she thinks that your splendid fortune would make a comfortable provision."

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"Still she would be obliged to have me in her set."

"Not she! You would be only the wife of her younger son. When the family should be in town during the season, you would be stowed away at some remote country house, while Lord George could live at his club. When the family should be in the country, indeed you might be invited to dinner with the parson and the doctor!"

"This is almost insulting! Why do you say these things to me, Joseph Morris?" exclaimed the girl, flushing deeply.

"In the first place, because I feel them to be true! In the second place, to save you, if possible, from a false and fatal step!"

"Do you think I am in danger of taking it?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because your manner to the marchioness and her disreputable son was——"

"Well, what? what was my manner?"

"Not what I expected from Helen Lyle!"

"But you have told me what it was not!—tell me what it was!"

"Toadying!"

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"Well! Upon—my—word—and—HONOR!" exclaimed Helen, with her large brown eyes dilating and sparkling with indignation, as she started up and paced up and down the room.

He followed her with his eyes. Her bosom was heaving, her face flushed, her eyes still scintillating light. His very heart sank like lead in his bosom. His face grew deadly pale and his hands icy cold—he felt as if he could have died on the spot; he would rather have offended the whole world than Helen Lyle.

Suddenly she came up and stood panting with passion before him, saying—

"Toadying! You said toadying!"

"Yes, I said toadying! and I cannot take back the word, because it expresses just what I mean, Helen, and I can think of no civiller one to use in its place. You asked me for truth, Helen, and I gave it you! I can do no otherwise; God help me!" cried the young man, in a voice of anguish, using quite unconsciously the very words that Martin Luther used in the hour of his greatest extremity.

Helen rushed away from him, and walked heatedly up and down the floor.

"I feel that I have mortally offended you, Miss

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Lyle, and that I must depart," said the young man, taking his hat, and bowing lowly, as he passed her.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MADMAN FINDS A KEEPER.

"No! STAY!" exclaimed Helen Lyle, in a tone so emphatic, and with a gesture so commanding, as suddenly to arrest the steps of Joseph Morris, who stood like a statute where she stopped him.

She was still very much agitated; her bosom was heaving and setting; her cheeks flushing and paling; her eyes flashing and smouldering with the passion she could not entirely subdue.

"It is very bitter—very hard to swallow, but it is the—truth!" she cried, with an effort that seemed to choke her, as she sank down into a corner of the sofa and bowed her head upon her hand for a few moments. Then looking up, and seeing him still standing, she beckoned him to take the chair at her right hand, saying—

"Sit down, Joseph Morris. I have no right to be offended with your straightforward honesty;

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nor must you think of leaving my house for such a cause. For the just rebuke you have given me, Joseph, I esteem and honor you the more."

"Helen! oh, if you did but know the exquisite pain it caused me to tell you that truth, you would almost forgive me!" said the young man, in a broken voice, as he stood humbly before her.

"I know! I know! and I do not forgive but *thank* you! I witnessed the great effort that it cost you to speak that humiliating truth, and I feel that it was all the more noble in you to do so. Great Heaven! what a thing the truth is! It shook you like a storm to utter it; it convulsed my whole nature to receive it! The passage of electricity from one tempest-cloud to another was nothing to it! But sit down; sit down; and promise me now that henceforth you will always do as you have done to-day;—always tell me the truth of myself, however bitter, humiliating, or wounding to my self-love it may be."

"Yes, Helen, I promise you."

"Notwithstanding that I may fly into a passion with my Mentor, as I have done this afternoon."

"Notwithstanding even that."

"Ah, Joseph, you were right in another thing you said to me! I have not the everlasting self-

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possession that marks the highest breeding. I have proved that by entirely losing my temper this afternoon. No, I have the passions of my class, and I

"'Have not the repose
That stamps the caste of Vere de Vere,'"

said Helen, smiling.

"And yet, dear Helen, I doubt whether the most statuesque of all ossified peeresses could have borne what you have this afternoon without some disturbance of their stolidity. And you, Helen, could not have been blamed if you had ordered me from your presence that instant; the act would have been natural and proper."

"I could not have done that, for your words, though they wounded me to the quick, were those of truth—truth painfully but nobly spoken!" said Helen, with a vivid blush. "Yet do not think of me worse than I deserve! If I was betrayed to-night into 'toadying' this marchioness, believe me, such is not my habit!"

"That such is not consistent with your character I know, Helen; and therefore, that such is not your habit, I believe."

"You are but just to me in saying this. I do not, indeed, court the upper classes with whom I

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am sometimes brought to associate. But this Lady M——, with her overpowering affectionateness, seems to bewilder me and compel from me an excess of courtesy in return that must indeed seem to an honest observer very like 'toadying.' But it is the influence of this lady's presence over me, Joseph. Nothing more serious I assure you."

"I understand it all now, Helen; and yet I *do* wonder that *you* should have been so carried away. But then I knew that Lady M—— is said to be the most attractive and fascinating woman to women, as well as to men, in all London.

"You do not think, Joseph, that, with all her enchantments, she could bewitch me into marrying Lord George."

"I should hope not, indeed."

"And as for the lady, I shall break her spell by breaking off the acquaintance."

"You will do well, Helen."

"And now let us return to the subject that was interrupted by the visit of the marchioness," said Miss Lyle, drawing toward her a small sofa-table, upon which stood a casket of jewels, which she opened and displayed, saying—

"Here, Joseph, here are some fine pearls which I have selected for your bride; they will well

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become her childlike beauty. You will offer them to her in my name, and ask her to accept, with them, the best wishes of her bridegroom's oldest friend."

Helen's voice faltered a little at the close of this speech as she gently pushed the casket toward Joseph Morris. He was dumb with astonishment for a moment, ere he could recover his self-possession, and answer—

"Thank you, dearest Helen, for this generous thought; but, thank Heaven, I have no bride!"

"No bride! Why, whatever do you mean? I thought—I was—was—positively assured that you were upon the eve of marriage with Elizabeth Bell," exclaimed Helen, in a trembling voice, and with a rapidly changing color.

"Such an engagement did exist, but it has been broken off by mutual consent," said the young man gravely.

Helen was too deeply disturbed to reply for some moments. At length, forcing herself to speak, she said, in a low voice—

"This is some foolish lovers' quarrel, that must be made up."

"Never, Helen! It can never be made up," Joseph exclaimed, earnestly.



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"Oh, but you say that because you are still very angry with her; but you are also very unhappy—you must be so; and she, no doubt, is at this moment breaking her heart——"

"She is at this moment, probably, chuckling at the idea of having got rid of a most unpromising engagement."

"You only think so; let me, an old friend, mediate between you."

"Not for the world!—not for ten thousand worlds! In this seemingly exaggerated language, Helen, I only speak the truth. Nothing in the universe would tempt me to bind myself to that fatal engagement from which I am now so honorably and so happily free!" exclaimed the young man, earnestly.

"You astonish me beyond measure! Will you explain how this occurred? I hope it was not you, Joseph, who first broke the engagement, or gave just cause to her to break it," said Helen, in a deeply interested manner.

"No; it was not I who broke the troth. Lizzy's own act this morning freed me from the consequences of a tremendous mistake that *might* have ruined her happiness, and that *must* have ruined mine."

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"But why did she do this? I hope you gave her no just cause?"

"None."

"Why, then, was your marriage broken off?"

"Because she did not love me at all!"

"And when did she first find this out?"

"When she found out that my uncle had disinherited me, and my employers had discharged me, and that I was, in fact, an almost penniless man, without visible means of supporting a wife."

"And has your uncle indeed disinherited you?" inquired Helen, in consternation.

"He has indeed, Helen."

"But for heaven's sake, upon what account?"

"Speaking the truth."

"Speaking the truth!"

"Yes, Helen; for confessing, when the question was forced upon me, that I should not be absolutely inconsolable if he were to die."

"But how strange! Did he really expect you to be so?"

"I do not know; at all events he did not like to be told otherwise."

"Why, what an unreasonable old soul! Why, even parents do not wish their children to break

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their hearts from excess of filial piety at their decease."

"No; but you see uncles are more egotistical and less disinterested than parents."

"And has he really disinherited you upon this account?"

"Yes."

"What a very weak old man; and how very unfortunate that you should have been compelled by truth to cross his weakness."

"It was, indeed."

"And you told me, I think, that your employers had——"

"Dismissed me; yes."

Strange that two such misfortunes should have happened to you upon the same day!"

"And for the same cause, Helen."

"For the same cause?"

"Yes; for speaking the truth!"

"For speaking the truth?"

"Yes."

"How singular!—and how unlucky that you should have been obliged to speak so many offensive truths in so short a time as to deprive you at once of your inheritance and your employment.

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But how was it in this second instance? What fatal facts were you compelled to divulge?"

"When plainly questioned by our customers, I was obliged, in one instance, to confess that the prints marked 'fast colors' would fade; in another, that the silks marked 'French,' and 'three shillings a yard,' were inferior English, worth only two shillings; and so on through a morning of the usual cross-examination by customers to whom this morning I was resolved to answer truly."

"Ha! ha! ha!—then I do not wonder that you were discharged. And for these reasons your betrothed discarded you?"

"For these reasons, really, Helen; but ostensibly for the same cause that lost me my inheritance and my situation."

"You do not mean for speaking the truth?"

"Yes."

"But what unpardonable truths could you have had to tell your betrothed?"

"First, that she was not an angel; secondly, that she was not even a perfect woman; thirdly, much more in the same strain."

"You were finding fault with her?"

"No, I was simply telling her the truth in reply

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to questions and observations she pressed upon me; nor would she have taken offence at my answers had she not been anxious for an excuse to break with me, because I had lost everything, and was therefore no longer an eligible match for her. She would have been ashamed to have broken with me upon account of my misfortunes, but she eagerly seized upon the opportunity that my truth-telling afforded her. But I had better tell you all about it, dear Helen, and then you will understand the subject better."

And Joseph related nearly word for word all that had passed between himself and Lizzy, and ended by saying—

"Thus, you see, I made the discovery of how really selfish, hard, and treacherous was she to whom I was about to commit my whole life's welfare, and found out in the same moment that her apparent affection for me had been nothing but self-interest, and that mine for her had been a moral illusion dispelled by the touchstone of truth. So, Helen, do not condole with me, but congratulate me upon this great deliverance. Like yourself, Helen, I may never marry, but at least, thank God, I am free."

There fell a silence between them for a few

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moments, and then they raised their heads, and by a simultaneous impulse their eyes met.

"Joseph," whispered Helen, in a low voice, "you promised always to tell me the truth—will you do so now?"

"Now and always, dear Helen."

"Then tell me the name of the woman whom you have so exalted in your imagination, whom you profess to admire so much, but whom, without seeming to know it, in reality you love so devotedly."

Swift baths of fire and ice seemed successively to burn and freeze his blood, as, with a voice choked with emotion, he faltered—

"Ah, Helen! one placed so high above me in worth as well as in wealth that I have never dared to hope for her love, or to acknowledge even to myself how devotedly I could have loved her had I been permitted to do so!"

"Her name—tell me her name?" whispered the young woman.

"*Helen Lyle!*" breathed the young man, sinking upon his knees, and bowing his head over her hand that he had taken.

Bending her face lowly over his auburn curls, she whispered—

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"And will Helen's love console you a little for all that you have lost to-day?"

"Ah, Helen!" cried Joseph, in a voice suffocated with emotion.

"Because, if it will, it is yours," said the girl, bending still lower over his head, and murmuring close to his ear.

Then, with gentle force, she raised him from his kneeling posture.

In another moment he was seated by her side; his tongue was loosed, and he was pouring forth, with all the eloquence of passion, his long-hidden admiration, and long-sealed love, to ears that gladly listened to the tale; and then he learned how long, how exclusively, and how unchangeably Helen had loved him, even from their childhood; how she had resolved never to marry any one else; and how, when she had heard that he was to be married to Elizabeth Bell, she had still wished to befriend him, and had gone secretly to Black, Brown & Co., and had deposited five thousand pounds with them to Joseph Morris's credit, upon condition of their taking him into partnership on his marriage.

All this came out through the obligatory truth-telling on both sides; and finally, it broke upon

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them like a sunburst that it was truth-telling which had brought him all this happiness at last.

"God bless the truth! Long live the truth! It got me into some ugly scrapes at first, but has brought me gloriously through them all; and henceforth will I speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, so long as I live!" exclaimed Joseph, with enthusiasm, as, late that evening, he took a happy leave of Helen Lyle, and threw himself into an up-town omnibus.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE INVESTIGATION.

Glorious!
O'er all the ills of life victorious!"

JOSEPH MORRIS was just stepping out of the omnibus at the stand, with a face perfectly radiant with happiness, wild with joy, when a familiar voice, in a very unfamiliar tone, struck his ear, exclaiming—

"Ah! there he is, now, poor dear fellow! Thank Heaven, we have found him at last! But good gracious how wild he do look, to be sure—for all the world as if he was a-going to leap and

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dance. Anybody, only to see him now, would know as how he was ramping mad. Joey, my poor dear boy, do you know your old dear aunty?" inquired good Mrs. Morris, looking anxiously into his face.

Astonishment at this question blending with the delight that was effervescing in his heart and sparkling from his face, *did* make our hero look rather queer. Seizing his aunt's hand, and shaking it heartily in the ecstacy of his soul, he answered, joyously—

"Know you? why, what should hinder me from knowing you? To be sure I know you, Aunt Molly? And oh, aunt, I am so happy!"

"Are you, poor dear innocent?" she said, in a coaxing tone, edging cautiously away from him. Then turning to the policeman who was attending her, she whispered—

"He gets wilder and wilder: you'd better secure him at once, before he does himself or some one else a mischief. And you'd better slip the cuffs on him, for fear he should break away; but oh, Mr. Policeman, don't be rougher than you can help with him, as if he was a convict, which there never was one in our family. Be gentle with him, poor misfortunate!"

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Joseph Morris, totally oblivious or incredulous about Harry Blewitt's threat of Bedlam, gazed from one to the other in wild surprise, which, joined to the excessive delight that still radiated from his face, and the authentic accounts of his strange behavior during the day, certainly warranted the strongest suspicions of his sanity. The policeman, deluded by Mrs. Morris, and deceived by Mr. Joseph's own looks, approached him cautiously; and then, before Joseph had time to recover his astonishment, or think of resisting the outrage, this experienced man-catcher had slipped the hand-cuffs upon the wrists of the supposed maniac, who, finding himself so unexpectedly restrained, began, too late, to struggle, stamp, and threaten, exclaiming—

"What's all this? What the deuce do you mean? Take them off this instant! What have I done? Release me, I say! I'll make you repent of this. Let me go this moment, I say!"

"Oh, deary me, oh, deary me! It's mounting higher and higher. Oh, Joey, my poor, dear innocent, do be quiet, and go with the kind gentleman. It's to do you good," coaxed Mrs. Morris, keeping at a safe distance all the time.

"Kind gentleman! an insolent policeman,

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going beyond his authority. I'll pay him for it!" cried the young man, still struggling violently.

"Oh, my poor dear boy, it's all for your own good; it's to keep you from doing mischief."

"Doing mischief! I believe you are all mad."

"Ah, that's the way with all these misfortunates; they think everybody mad but themselves," whimpered Mrs. Morris.

"Same as drunkards, mum, as thinks every body intoxified but themselves," said the policeman, who was red in the face with his efforts to force the victim into a cab.

"As sure as I live I will punish you, you insolent wretch! and you, too, aunt," exclaimed Joseph, vindictively.

"Ah, poor dear innocent, he don't know what he's a saying of. It's the worst of these poor misfortunates as they allers turns against their best friends," sobbed the old lady.

"Sure to do it, mum: cause why? their intellectuals are bottom upwards likewise," said the hard-working officer, as the perspiration poured from his face in his efforts to master the supposed lunatic.

"Oh, Mr. Policeman, call some one to help

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Cabby, why don't you help?" cried Mrs. Molly, desperately.

"Couldn't leave the horse, mum. He's frightened now, and might run away," replied the amused cabman, who enjoyed the scene much too keenly to interfere to shorten it.

"The idea of a cab-horse running away; I'd as soon expect the monument to bolt! Don't tell that to a Londoner. La! won't some of you help, gentlemen, to get this poor misfortunate young man into a cab?" said the old lady, appealing to the by-standers.

"I'll help, mum. Poor gentleman! I thought how he wer' addled this morning when he talked so queer, and when I axed him for a penny guv me a crown," said a man, stepping forward, and proving to be the very tramp whom Joseph had relieved in the morning.

"And did *you* see him also this morning, my good man? then come along with us and tell us all about it, how he acted, and what he said," urged Mrs. Morris.

But the tramp was helping the policeman, and between them both Joseph Morris, struggling, kicking, butting, biting, and resisting in every possible manner his manacled hands would permit

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was forced into the cab. The policeman and the tramp jumped in after to take care of him. Mrs. Morris, fearing to trust herself so near a madman, took another cab.

And then amid the hurrahs of the crowd that had collected to witness the fun, they drove off toward Little Britain, and drew up before the house of Mr. John Morris.

The tramp and the policeman had made such good use of their opportunities in the cab, that they had succeeded in binding the accused maniac hand and foot; and in this helpless condition Joseph Morris was lifted out and borne into the front parlor and deposited upon a large sofa. His veins were swollen, his face was crimson, his eyes glaring, and his mouth foaming with impotent fury; he looked, indeed, like a maniac ready to break forth into frenzy.

The room was half full of people who had come to attend his examination, and had been impatiently awaiting his appearance.

First, there was his uncle John Morris, who came and looked over him with a very penitent air, saying, with the tears in his eyes—

"Ah, poor fellow! poor fellow! I'd beg his

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pardon if I thought he would understand a word I said!"

Then Dr. Cotton, the comfortable medical attendant of the family, who came and gazed sympathetically upon the inflamed, glaring, foaming face, and sighed, felt the bounding pulse and groaned, and, lastly, looked around on the assembled friends and shook his head.

"What do you think, doctor? Hadn't we better get him off at once to some asylum where he can be taken care of?" inquired the affectionate but cowardly and terrified Mrs. Morris.

"I would rather question some of the friends who have observed his manners during the day, before I give a final opinion," said Dr. Cotton.

About a half-dozen men and women started forward and began all to speak at once.

"One at a time! One at a time my dear, dear, good friends! Mrs. Morris, do you speak first, and pray tell us what you observed in the appearance of your nephew when he first came down in the morning?" inquired Dr. Cotton.

"La, doctor! when he entered the breakfast-room, which is just behind this room, you know, he looked very odd about the eyes, and said his head felt queer."

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"Yes, and then?"

"Why, then, all of a sudden, without any provocation from us at all, he broke out quite savage and said he didn't care if we were both dead the next minute, and frightened me and his uncle terribly, and then burst away, and ran out of the house," said Mrs. Molly, quite unconscious of the exaggeration of her statement, which put so different a face upon the scene she attempted to describe.

Dear, dear, dear, how shocking! And you also witnessed this strange behavior, Mr. Morris?" said the doctor, appealing to old John.

"Yes; though so little did I then suspect that the poor lad's wits were leaving him, that I got angry and said how I would cut him off with a shilling!"

"And yet you might have known it, John, for he never *did* behave so before, and his attack on us was quite unprovoked," said Mrs. Molly.

"True, true, all true," groaned poor old John.

"Well, now, Mr. Black, will you tell us——"

"If you please, sir, I should like to be questioned, as I believe 'ow I was the next person has saw Mr. Joseph Morris hafter 'e left 'is huncle's 'ouse."

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"Oh! and who are you, my good woman?" inquired the doctor.

"Hi'm Miss Robinson, and as hi was in town this hevening to 'ear Mr. Spurgeon, hi 'appened also to 'ear what was agoing on at the 'ouse, and thought 'ou I would come in and give my own hevidence."

"And what do you know of the affair, Mrs.—Mrs. ——"

"*Miss* —— and *Robinson*, sir: that's my name, Miss Robinson."

"Well, what can you tell us of Mr. Morris's deportment to-day, Miss Robinson?"

"Well, sir, I met 'im as I was coming out of Black's, and 'e was going 'hin. And 'is conduct was most hodd."

"In what respect, Miss Robinson?"

"Why, sir, it most hecocentric."

"How?"

"Well, sir, most hextraordinary."

"You must be more explicit, Miss Robinson. Tell us what he said or did."

"Well, sir, first—'e ran against me with all 'is force, and butted me in the breast, which I would 'ave hoverlooked if it adn't been for the rest."

"What else?"



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"'E talked in the most hextragant way, sir, 'e said 'ow my bonnet was too young for such an *hold* woman, too light for such an *'eavy* woman, and too helegant for hany waiting-woman; which it stands to reason, sir, 'e must 'ave been very much hintoxified, which, as it was early in the morning, 'e could not 'ave been, or helse 'e was very mad to have thought such things of my bonnet and me!"

"Humph, I should take this statement as strong rebutting testimony against the charge of insanity, if I did not know from experience that madmen often have a great deal of malicious wit," said the doctor, in a low voice, turning to old John Morris. Then resuming his examination of Miss Robinson, he asked—

"Any thing else?"

"Yes, sir, 'e called me a stout hold waiting woman—hover-dressed! w'ich you'll hadmit, doctor, for saying that 'e *hought* to 'ave the shower waistcoat and the straight bath administered, and not to be hallowed to go about hinsulting people with 'is hexcentricities."

"He will, probably, be restrained, Miss Robinson! You may sit down now," said the doctor.

Miss Robinson withdrew, taking care to make

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an awful grimace at the bonnet victim as she passed him, as much as to say—

"Hif I can only get you into the mad 'ouse for calling me stout and 'eavy, I'll do it!"

Joseph Morris laughed. He had sufficiently recovered from his first astonishment and indignation to be able to control himself and watch the proceedings with some degree of interest and amusement. But his laughing at all under such circumstances was considered another proof of his madness, and was immediately received in evidence against him.

"And now, Mr. Black," said the doctor.

The senior partner of B. B. W. and G. came forward, and said—

"I can only say that his conduct in our shop this morning was that of a man entirely bereft of his senses. It is altogether unlike his usual conduct. I had never seen any thing like it before."

"Pray explain what he said and did."

"Well, sir, he drove away every customer from our shop! every one, sir. I do assure you upon my honor."

"Shocking! I had no idea that he had broken out into such violence!"

"Violence! why, sir, when we attempted to

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expostulate with him and control him, he assailed us with the most awful abuse, called us cheats, and swindlers, and every other bad name that he could lay his tongue to!"

"Dear, dear me! how dreadful."

"Yes, sir, and finally he leaped upon his feet, cleared the counter at a single bound, and rushed into the street!"

"Good heaven, how terrible! but had anything happened to excite or anger him?"

"Nothing whatever, sir; we were all upon the very best terms that morning."

"And what did the poor young man do next?"

"I really do not know," said Mr. Black, who, prepossessed now with the idea of Joseph's insanity, was probably quite unconscious of the gross misrepresentations in his statement.

"Please, your honor, it wur me as met the young gent fust arter he run out of Black's," said the tramp, coming forward, and pulling his forelock.

"Well, tell us all about it."

"Vy, you see, sur, as I was standing in front o' Black's, vaiting to open carriage-doors for a penny, ven all of a suddent this young gent spins

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out of the door as if the Old Nick had pitched him; and he looks up and down the street wild as luny, and, sez he, 'vat shall I do?' and then I made so bold to hint as to give a poor man a penny moight be about the right thing to do. And he answered how *he didn't see it*, and *he was another*, and *served me right*, and all such like-randomy talk as had nothink to do with what I axed him. And then, zur, he went to moaning and complaining, and bewailing hisself, 'acause he said he hadn't a wife and fifteen small childrен, mostly twins, specially the three last; which your honor will own no man, unless he was stark mad, would ever want, and which it is clear this young gent could not possibly a' had even if he'd got married at ten years old!"

"Well, well, never mind that! What next?"

"Why, he tossed me a crown, and made off with himself; and that was all I saw of him until I saw him in a raving mad fit at the 'bus stand, and was called to help to take him—and a job we had of it. I'll never help to take a mad man again, I'm bit in a dozen places at least; look here! and here! and here!" said the man, showing the wounds received in the conflict.

"Shocking! absolutely shocking!"

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"Now, sur, as you're a medical man, I'll like you to tell me if it's dangerous, and if I'm like to go mad along of it; and if so be I am, I'd thank you to give me an ante—whats-its-name, to stop it."

"You are not in any danger; the bite of a maniac does not cause hydrophobia like that of a rabid dog, so that you will not require an antidote. You may go."

The tramp did not "go," he was too much interested in the proceedings; but he withdrew to an obscure corner of the room, and stood watching the scene, quite unsuspicious of the gross exaggeration in his testimony.

"Now, friends, if there is any one here who saw this unhappy young man in the next stage of his proceedings, I should like to hear their account of it," said the doctor.

"Come, my poor darling, come! it is unpleasant, I know, but it's your bounden duty," said Mrs. Molly, urging forward a young girl, whom she at length led up to the doctor, saying—"Here, doctor, this is Miss Bell, poor child; she saw Joseph early in the afternoon; they were to have been married soon, poor children, but Lord!

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Lord! who can tell what a day may bring forth!'

"How did Mr. Morris appear when you saw him, my child?" inquired the doctor.

Lizzy had her face buried in her pocket-handkerchief, and was sobbing, or pretending to sob, as she answered—

"He came to see me at about one o'clock this afternoon, and he behaved most cruel, violent, and insulting to me!"

"Tell me, my dear, what he did and said?"

"He frowned at me, and stared at me horribly—enough to frighten me out of my wits, and he called me a perfect fright, and a regular devil!"

This was Lizzy's translation of the mild and truthful phrases "not a beauty," and "by no means an angel." But Miss Lizzy was fortunately not upon her oath.

"And what else, my dear?"

"Oh, a great deal more of the same sort. And please don't ask me any more, it was so dreadful! it almost frightened me to death! and now I hope nobody will expect me to keep my engagement and marry a madman, because I can't do it!" sobbed Lizzy.

"Certainly not, my child! at least, not at pres-

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ent," said the benevolent doctor, who was too much impressed by Miss Lizzy's infantile beauty to perceive her heartlessness.

"No, neither at present nor in the future! I want that to be distinctly understood, for I think that when an engagement is broken off, especially with a madman, it had better never be renewed,' said the selfish and cautious Miss Lizzy.

"Yes, my darling; it shall be just as you say. Poor thing! she is so frightened and upset by all things, that she doesn't know what she is talking about," said Mrs. Molly, leading her away.

"Yes, but I *do* know what I am talking about; and I want every body concerned to understand that the engagement is for ever at an end," persisted Lizzy.

"Well, well, my dear, we will talk of that some other time, when you are yourself, you know," answered Mrs. Molly, who could not be made to recognize Lizzy Bell's utter selfishness.

"And now, sir," said old John to the doctor, "you have heard all that we know; and what do you think? He seems quieter now; and mightn't we venture to keep him here to-night? I hardly like to send the poor fellow off to-night."

"I fear," replied the doctor, "that it is the

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mere quietude of mental and physical exhaustion. I fear that when his strength returns he may break out into fury again."

"Oh, yes, doctor, to be sure 'e will! Hi know something of madness myself, 'aving 'ad several nice young men go raving mad upon my account Don't you trust him, Mr. John. Hit's all 'is hart to deceive you. Madmen are wonderful cunning; 'e might burst loose, and break hall your 'eads, and set the 'ouse on fire!" said Miss Robinson, who had no idea of having any indulgence granted to this victim.

"Oh, John, so he might! and then finish up by jumping into the river, poor innocent! It's very painful, John, but indeed I'm afraid he had better be sent away to-night. The doctor knows a nice place kept by a friend of his, where the poor boy might be taken care of for a few days, until we can see what to do with him," said Mrs. Molly, weeping. "What do you think, doctor?"

"I think it would be the only safe plan."

"Then the sooner it is done the better. Will somebody run and call a cab?" inquired Mr. John Morris, giving a terrified glance toward Joseph, who, notwithstanding the fact that his

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hands and feet were tightly bound, had managed, by the violent wriggling of his body, to raise himself in a sitting posture upon the sofa, where he remained, glaring around upon the company.

"Oh, lors! oh, dear! his fit is coming on again! Run—run, somebody, for a cab, and let us get him off before he does mischief!" cried Mrs. Molly.

The tramp started on the errand; but as he opened the door, he stepped back to make way for two visitors, who had entered the hall unannounced, but whom he heralded as—

"Another lady and gemman as knows summut about somethin'!"

And Helen Lyle and Harry Blewitt entered the room.

Joseph Morris made a bound to meet his betrothed, but was immediately seized and held down by the doctor and Mr. John.

Harry Blewitt made a circular bow to the assembled company, and then adressing the mistress of the house, said—

"Mrs. Morris, I hope you will permit me to explain the reason of my present intrusion. The fact is, that the omnibus-driver who brought my friend Joseph up to the city went back to Streat-

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ham with a 'cock-and-bull' story of the furious young madman, Mr. Joseph Morris, who was seized upon the moment he got out of the 'bus. This story told among the cabmen, hostlers, and waiters of the Crown and Spectre, was heard by Miss Lyle's footman, who had gone there for his evening's beer, and in this manner reached the ears of Miss Lyle herself, who, believing that some great injustice must have been perpetrated, ordered her horses and drove to town. She did me the honor to call at my lodgings, and request me to attend her hither. Her requests had all the force of commands, and I came hither with pleasure, especially as I happen to possess the key of Morris's insanity. But first permit me to release my friend."

And after depositing Helen Lyle in an arm-chair, Blewitt drew a penknife from his pocket, opened it, advanced toward Joseph Morris, and before the astounded company suspected his intention, he had cut the cords that bound the captive, and set him upon his feet.

"What are you about?" cried the doctor.

"He is mad!" exclaimed Mr. John.

"Furious!" cried Mrs. Molly.

"He'll do mischief!" said the doctor.

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"He'll hurt some one!" said Mr. John.

"He'll drown himself, poor fellow!" wept Mrs. Molly.

"E'll break hall our 'eads, and set the 'ouse on fire!" shrieked Miss Robinson, doubling the uproar, while every one shrank away to distant parts of the room to get as far as possible from the let loose madman.

"He'll do nothing of the sort. The only harm he is likely to do you will be to prosecute the whole lot of you for assault, and afterwards sue you for slander! Mr. Morris, your nephew is no more mad than you or I."

"You know nothing about it, sir! He is as mad as a March hare!"

"On the contrary I know all about it, as I will soon prove to you. It is now just ten o'clock," said Blewitt, taking out and consulting his watch, "consequently, it is just twenty-four hours since this time last evening, when Joseph Morris and myself were coming out of Mr. Spurgeon's chapel, after hearing that reverend gentleman's terrific sermon upon lying. Upon that occasion I laid a sort of wager with my friend Morris that he could not speak the truth, even in answer to customary questions, for one day, without being turned off

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by his uncle, discharged by his employers, and discarded by his sweetheart; and, furthermore, that he could not continue to speak it for a week without getting into the lunatic asylum. Joseph Morris, was not this our compact?"

"Yes," said Joseph, "it was."

"The experiment has succeeded beyond my utmost expectations, for I find that my friend has spoken the truth in answer to the simple common questions of the day for just fifteen hours, and the worst that I predicted has happened to him. Joseph Morris, speak now, and answer for yourself."

"Yes," said Joseph; "in answer to the simplest and most commonplace questions, I have mildly answered the truth only since seven o'clock this morning, and I have been subjected to extreme loss and degrading outrage. Uncle," he continued, turning to old John, "if you will candidly recall the scene of the morning, you will find it was very different from that which the fears of yourself and my aunt imagined and described. The worst I said, was, that I should not break my heart if you both should die——"

"Yes, Joseph, but you see, I thought by your saying *that* you meant a good deal more."

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"That was because you were not accustomed to hearing simple truth."

"Well, well, my boy, now I understand it all, I am sure I beg your pardon."

"No; say you forgive me, uncle! that is all I require."

"Very well, then, have it your own way! I am so glad that you are neither ungrateful nor mad—which is the same as saying that you are neither heartless nor brainless, that I am willing either to grant you my pardon or to beg yours!" said the old man, extending his hand to Joseph, who seized it and shook it warmly.

"Miss Robinson, I have no other defence to make to *your* accusation than this, that you appealed to my judgment as to the propriety of your dress, and I gave my opinion in all sincerity."

"You 'ould your tongue!" retorted the abigail.

"Mr. Black, as to *your* statement, that I drove your customers from your shop, I have only to explain that I did so by telling them the truth as to the worthless quality and exaggerated prices of your goods. If this truth-telling has injured you, you have your remedy in a suit for damages

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against me; though I scarcely think you will care to make the matter so public!"

"You are beneath my notice, sir!" said Black, turning away.

"And you," said Joseph, turning to the tramp, "I told *you* no unpleasant truths; I did not hurt *your* feelings, or injure *your* business, and I scarcely expected to find *you* among my accusers."

"Lord bless your life, sir, but you guv me a crown; and if that warn't a just cause for me thinking you out of your lunacies, I don't know what was. Hows'ever I'm glad I was mistaken; and as you *did* know what you was a-doin' of ven you guv me the crown, all I wish is that you may yourself be crowned with joy, and here's my hand upon it!" said the tramp.

"Thank you! And now, Elizabeth Bell, as the charge that you have made against me is the most serious of all, I call upon you at least to modify it. The most offensive language that I used to you in answer to an observation that you made was simply to the effect that you were neither a perfect beauty nor a perfect angel—was it not?"

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"Yes; but that was all one as calling me a horrid fright and a regular devil."

"No, Lizzy it is not; it is only your habit of reckless assertion and inaccurate language that makes you say or think so. You need not be a fright because you are not a beauty, nor a——"

"Now, Mr. Morris, you needn't try to make it up with me, because I won't do it!"

"Heaven forbid! and all that I beg of you now is, that you will be more sincere with one that you like better than ever you have been with me!" said Joseph, taking the hand of Lizzy and placing it in that of Henry Blewitt.

"And now Helen—dear Helen! who took me up when all others had abandoned me—what shall I say to you?"

"Why, to me, nothing now and here; but to your friends you may say that, as for speaking the truth for a day they have voted you to be a madman, they had better appoint me as your keeper."

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# WINNY.

Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me.
MATTHEW xviii. 5.

A light and busy foot astir
In her small housewifery, the liveliest bee
That ever wrought in hive.—MISS MITFORD.

Down on the green flats north of the Capitol used to be seen a small white cottage, half hid among fruit trees. It had a little flower-yard before, and a little vegetable garden on one side, and a poultry-yard with a small hen-house and wood-shed behind. The cottage had but four rooms—a little parlor and a kitchen on the ground-floor, and two chambers up stairs. The front chamber was occupied by the master of the house and his wife, and the back chamber by their daughter, a little girl of twelve years old.

The name of the master and mistress of this humble home was Simpson, and the name of their little girl was Lizzie.

At this time Mr. Simpson was an honest, merry, soft-hearted man enough, though lately engaged in a heart-hardening calling, viz. that of constable



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for the ward. When Mr. Simpson first engaged in this business, he felt a great deal of sympathy for the sin and misery constantly before his eyes as a constable; but as his sensibilities were those of nature, and not of religion, they soon gave way before habit; and after ten years of familiarity with crime and suffering, Mr. Simpson was a very different man, as you will see by contrasting two acts of his life.

Mrs. Simpson had been a healthy, cheerful, handsome girl, when she was married, but by drinking strong tea and coffee, and eating hot bread, and wearing tight clothes, and breathing bad air, she had destroyed her health, and was now almost entirely confined to her parlor and her arm-chair, by day, with dyspepsia.

But Lizzie Simpson was a hearty, handsome, merry little girl, with black eyes and black curls, red cheeks, white teeth and smiling lips! I'll tell you a secret. Lizzie had chanced to read in some paper that strong coffee and tea, hot bread, bad air, idleness, and neglect of cleanliness, were bad for health, cheerfulness, and beauty, and in consequence, of course, bad for morals; and she had, unlike too many little girls, profited by what she read—and Lizzie was very clean, very temperate,

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and very, *very* industrious. So, of course, she was healthy, handsome, and cheerful.

Lizzie was her father's housekeeper and her mother's nurse. Lizzie cleaned the house, cooked the meals, fed the chickens, and milked the cow, when she was twelve years old. It is true her father helped her a great deal. He chopped the wood, and brought the water, and took care of the garden. So Lizzie was never weary of work —work was her play.

Every little girl has a want, or fancies a want. Lizzie wished for a *pet;* oh! she wanted a pet so much.

One warm day, in the middle of summer, Lizzie got tea ready early. She set the table out under the trees in the front yard, and gathered some ripe raspberries to eat with milk from their own cow. And she carried her mother's rocking-chair out and set it at the table, and persuaded her mother to come out and sit in the cool shade and pleasant air. They were sitting there, waiting for the father, when he opened the little wicker gate, and came in. He sat down to tea. He was looking very serious. When Mrs. Simpson asked him what was the matter, and if he was in trouble, he answered, "Oh, no, no," and chased the gloom

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from his brow. He was then a kind-hearted man, and never liked to worry the invalid with bad news if he could help it. Presently he turned to Lizzie, and said cheerfully—

"I've got a pet for you, darling."

"Oh! thank you, dear father! But what is it?"

"Guess, now, daughter."

"A tortoise-shell pussy-cat?"

"No; guess again."

"A canary bird—*any* bird?"

"No; try again."

"A little puppy?"

"No; once more."

"I'm sure I don't know. 'Tisn't a monkey?"

"It is a baby!"

"A baby! Oh! father, I have given up playing babies a long time, and given them all away!" said Lizzie, with a look of mortification and disappointment.

"But I'm not talking about doll-babies. I have got a *real* baby—a living baby—a poor orphan baby, four weeks old, for you!"

"Oh! father! Oh! father!" exclaimed Lizzie, with inexpressible surprise and joy, "*do* tell

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me if it is so, sure enough! a live baby, and for me?

"Yes, indeed, Lizzie, it is just *so*, and no other way. I have found in a prison a little living orphan baby, and I give it to you for your own, to do what you please with."

"Oh! shall I not love it? Oh! this is so much better than a pussy-cat or a puppy! Oh! isn't it droll? Isn't it delightful? But pshaw! presently I shall wake up with the sun shining in my face, and find out that I have overslept myself, and been cheated by a morning dream!" said Lizzie, with a bewildered look.

"And if you *were* asleep, don't you think *this* would wake you?" inquired her father, giving her arm a sharp pinch.

Lizzie screamed, laughed—confessed herself awake.

"Well, I have been listening to all this, thinking may be you were joking; now tell me all about it," said Mrs. Simpson.

"Surely, mother, surely," replied her husband.

Then he began, and told how a short time before, by virtue of his office, it had been made his duty to arrest and put in prison a slave woman; how while in jail she had given birth to

a child, and then had died;—and finally, how the master had given the child to him. The good constable had choked back his tears two or three times while telling this story. So had Lizzie while hearing it; but at its conclusion her thoughts reverted to the baby, and she could scarcely feel for the poor mother, for the pleasure of thinking of the new baby pet.

"And really, father, they gave the baby to you?"

"Yes, Lizzie."

"And you will in deed and in truth give it to me?"

"Yes, honey!"

"And it is indeed to be *my* baby, and am I to keep it for ever, and to feed it, and dress it, and be its little mother? And when are you going to bring it? And is it a boy or a girl?"

"Yes! Lizzie, yes! to all your questions, and it is a gal, and I'm going to fetch it directly after supper—that is, if your mother has no objection."

"I have no objection—if you can trust Lizzie with the whole charge of it."

"To be sure I can."

"And if she's a mind to take the whole trouble of it"——

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"Oh, indeed, mother, that's just what I want to do."

"Well and good—I have no objection—but I warn you that I can't take any trouble—I can't have it sleeping in the room with us, keeping me awake at night," said Mrs. Simpson.

Her answer rather pleased her husband than otherwise, for he had expected from her a serious opposition to his plan.

After supper was over, Mr. Simpson went and brought the baby home. It was a healthy, pretty child—a bright mulatto, with black hair and eyes. Mrs. Simpson looked at the poor child with a sort of fretful, sickly pity. Lizzie took it off at once into her own room, laid it on her bed, and went and milked some new milk warm from the cow, and gave it.

The next day, how Lizzie rumaged over her clothes to find something to cut for the baby! As Lizzie was growing fast, and had no little sister to wear out her clothes, she had a good stock of frocks, petticoats, &c., that were too small for her. These, with her mother's leave, she cut up for the baby.

As months passed away the little one grew

finely, and by the end of the year she could walk and lisp a few words.

Half in fondness, half in fun, Lizzie had taught the little one to call her "mother," and that she ever afterwards called her.

For her charming and winsome ways Lizzy had called the little one Winny, and Winny was the name she ever afterwards went by.

As years passed on, and as Lizzy's father prospered and was promoted to be police constable, and then officer of the court, his ample salary enabled him to enlarge his house, and add many comforts and even luxuries to his life, and among other things to hire a house servant, and a man to tend the garden and run errands. This left Lizzie leisure to cultivate her own fine mind, and to educate her little daughter, as she called Winny. Mrs. Simpson seemed no better, yet got no worse; and thus passed the years until Winny was five years old, and Lizzie was seventeen. Then a young man, Robert Orrison, in a good business, saw and loved Lizzie, and came to visit her. When Lizzie knew this young man well, and found him so amiable and intelligent, she grew to love him; and as the parents on both sides approved of the match, Robert Orrison and Lizzie

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Simpson was married; and thus ends the first part of my story.

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It was the prettiest little house that was ever seen, where Bob Orrison and Lizzie went to housekeeping. Bob had bought a lot near the home of Lizzie's father and mother, and he had built a house all of one story. It was painted white, with green blinds, and had a piazza in front, with honeysuckles and jessamines traced around the posts. A flower garden was laid out before; behind was a covered shed that opened upon a small yard; and back of that was a vegetable garden, with some young fruit trees. All the furniture in the house was plain and cheap but new and nice. Everything was clean, and fresh. In the litle front parlor was a pretty red and white Wilton carpet, and nice straw-bottomed chairs, and highly-varnished cherry tables and stands; and the two front windows were curtained with white muslin, looped back with red ribbon, and a looking-glass hung between them. The furniture of Lizzie's chamber was all white — bedsteads, bureau, wardrobe, washstand, and chairs, were all pine, painted white, and varnished so brilliantly that they looked like white china. The windows

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shaded with white dimity, and a straw matting was on the floor.

Winny was taken home by Lizzie, and had a little room that opened into hers.

I wish I had time to tell you how proud and happy Lizzie was the first time that her father and mother came over to take tea with her and Bob; how she prepared such a nice little supper; and how she set the table in the little dining-room, back of the parlor; and how nice her white delf ware looked; and how glitteringly bright her bran new knives and forks and spoons were; and with what immaculate cleanliness and nice precision everything was laid upon the table; and how Bob Orrison brought home a pineapple as a treat. Yes, I wish I had time to dwell upon the day that Lizzie said was one of the pleasantest in her whole life. But I must go on with my story.

As years passed away, Lizzie found her adopted child very useful to her. Lizzie took great care to teach little Winny to read, write, and cast accounts; and also to sew, knit, wash, cook, and clean house; and Winny gave promise of eventually becoming as thrifty a little housekeeper as her teacher had been before her.

Thus time passed pleasantly enough, until little

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Winny became a smart girl of twelve years of age. At this time, Winny was such an expert little manager, that in the occasional absence of Lizzie she would take the whole charge of the house. Winny called Lizzie "mother," and Bob "father," and they both loved her as a daughter.

Indeed she seemed, from the affection they bore her, and the trust they reposed in her, like their eldest child; for Lizzie and Bob had other children—a boy of six, named Bob, and a girl of five called Lizzie—another boy three years old, called Willie, and a baby, named Millie. And Winny seemed like their eldest sister—she loved them so dearly, and took such great care of them.

Lizzie, or Mrs. Orrison, as we should now call her, was never afraid to go and leave the children in the care of Winny.

Thus passed the years, and Mr. and Mrs. Orrison prospered in mind, body, and estate. They were happy in all their social, domestic, and business relations. It was at this blissful period of their lives that the first trial of Lizzie's life befell her.

This was the death of her poor mother.

Lizzie was for a long time inconsolable for her loss, and Winny refused to be comforted because

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Lizzie was not. It took all Bob Orrison's considerate affection, and all Winny's and the children's love, to reconcile Lizzie to this dispensation of Providence.

It was a year before Lizzie attained her usual cheerfulness, and now, alas! came a succession of misfortunes upon poor Lizzie—troubles that inclined her, in her impatience, to exclaim against this sunny and fruitful earth, as a "howling wilderness full of alarms."

First of all, her father married again—a young, frivolous, vain, and selfish girl, who had not a particle of affection for him, but accepted his hand because she probably thought that keeping a pretty house of her own was pleasanter than sewing in other people's; for she had been a seamstress.

Now began a series of vexations, very hard for Lizzie to bear with patience. First of all, this young Mrs. Simpson disliked her step-daughter and her husband and children because they would be likely to succeed to a large portion of their father's property. Secondly, she tried to set Mr. Simpson against his daughter and her family. This was all very miserable, but the worst was yet to come.

One day, Mrs. Simpson happened to notice,

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some particular favor shown to Winny, and complained that "that nigger" had been spoiled; and then Mr. Simpson, wishing to defend his daughter, explained the cause of Mrs. Orrison's unusual affection for the child, and told how she had been adopted by Lizzie in early infancy.

"And the child was given to *you?*" asked Mrs. Simpson.

"Yes."

"Did the owner make a *deed* of her to you?"

"Yes; I took care of that. I was not going to have all the trouble, and expense, and inconvenience of having a young infant raised in my family, to have her taken away from us when she got old enough to be useful."

"And so you gave the baby to your daughter?"

"Yes; and she raised it like her own child, and that's the reason you see why she loves her so, and, as you say, spoils her so."

"Umph, humph—well—did you give your daughter a *deed* of her?"

"No—no necessity for that, you know. I should never take her from Lizzie—never *think* of it."

"Umph, humph—well—so she really belongs to us, after all?"

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"Well—yes—I suppose so."

After this conversation, Mrs. Simpson thought of nothing else but how she should persuade Mr. Simpson to claim Winny, and take her away from Mrs. Orrison. Mrs. Simpson had several motives for this. First, her dislike for Lizzie made her wish to trouble her by taking away Winny; and next, she desired just such a neat, industrious, capable girl as Winny, about the house. Not to make my story too long—she coaxed, worried, and argued with the "old man," until, by her persevering will, her sophistry, and her blandishments, she persuaded Mr. Simpson to write first, and request, politely and pleasantly, the return of Winny, saying in apology, that his *wife* needed her services.

Mrs. Simpson put in that clause as another despite to Lizzie.

Mrs. Orrison, as you may well suppose, was very much disturbed by this demand. She felt it came from her father's wife. She knew that Winny would not be under good moral influences with Mrs. Simpson. She knew that her father's health and life were very precarious, and that his new wife would have influence enough over him to make him leave Winny, by will, to herself.

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Alas! she felt that that would be a dreadful fate for Winny! She knew that Mrs. Simpson would treat her capriciously, if not cruelly. Lastly, she knew that the separation would seriously afflict her husband and children as well as herself, and that it would nearly break the heart of Winny. She did not reply to the note then. She waited until her husband came home in the evening; and after tea, and after Winny had put the children to bed, and had retired herself, Lizzie told him what had happened. He was very much surprised and concerned at the news. They held a consultation, and at the end of it decided that under all the circumstances, painful as it was, it became their duty to refuse compliance with their father's request. To do this in the most respectful manner, Robert stayed home from work the next day, and he and Lizzie walked over to their father's, and stated their reasons for wishing to keep Winny.

Mr. Simpson was very much displeased, and insisted upon his demand being complied with.

Robert replied, respectfully but firmly, that he could not give Winny up.

At this decided refusal, the old man grew extremely angry, wondered how they dared oppose

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his wishes, and threatened to make Robert suffer for it.

Robert and Lizzie returned home very much grieved at this, but fully determined never to give Winny up.

The old man was as bad as his word, because he was so wrought upon by his wife. He went that same day, and got out a writ of attachment, and placed it in the hands of the sheriff.

In the mean time, Robert and Lizzie were hoping that their father would think better of his threat, and that he would spare Winny and themselves. But their hopes were vain.

The next morning Robert went to work, and left Lizzie sewing at home, while Winny took charge of the children. Lizzie was making a vest and Winny was dividing her attention between the baby playing on the carpet, and some little needlework in her hand. The weather was so pleasant that the door was open, and the sight of the beautiful flower garden before them. Suddenly a shadow darkened the door, and Mr. Simpson entered, followed by the deputy sheriff.

"Good morning, Mrs. Orrison," said the latter, politely.

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Mr. Simpson did not speak to his daughter at all, but, pointing to Winny, said—

"That is the girl, Mr. Sheriff."

And then that officer, turning to Lizzie, said, as he laid his hand upon the shoulder of Winny—

"Mrs. Orrison, I arrest this girl as the property of Elisha Simpson, and at the suit of the same."

And he took possession of Winny. Lizzie grew pale as death. Winny's eyes opened wide with surprise; she did not understand the scene a whit. The children knew instinctively that something dreadful was about to take place, and they gathered around Winny, clung to her, and screamed in unison, Lizzie recovered from the momentary torpor of her first astonishment and dismay, and ran to her father, seized his two hands in hers, and begged, entreated, implored him to spare Winny, and not to take her away from the children and herself. But the old man was firm. Then she wept and prayed; but the old man had hardened his heart, and was obdurate. Winny, stupefied by surprise, was carried away by the deputy sheriff, and Mr. Simpson.

At noon, Robert came home, and found Lizzie ill with grief, and one of the neighbors with her. She gave, as well as she could, a broken account



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of the transaction of the morning; and Robert, after soothing her with hopeful words, went over to her father's house, and telling him how ill Lizzie was, besought him to restore Winny.

What was his dismay and grief to learn that Winny, their faithful and beloved Winny, was not there! that Winny, the amiable and intelligent Winny, whom they cherished as a dear child, was sold to a trader.

I am sure that I cannot describe the affliction of Robert when he heard this. He went home to Lizzie. He did not wish to tell her this dreadful news. But Lizzie saw the deep distress upon his face, and she questioned him anxiously, searchingly. He told her the truth. A fresh burst of grief followed this announcement. After she had done weeping and wringing her hands, she turned her tearful face to Robert, and said—

"Don't sit there doing nothing, Bob! don't! Something *must*, *shall* be done to rescue our child! Go to the officer who took her away! find out at what pen she—poor, dear child!—is placed; and at least we can see her! perhaps do something for her! Something *must*, *shall* be done immediately! Oh! go, Bob! go!"

This is what Robert Orrison had been thinking

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of himself. He went immediately to Mr. Allan, the officer who had served the writ, and told him the whole story of Winny having been given to his wife during the infancy of the former; of the love and esteem the whole family bore to Winny; of the great grief they felt at parting with her; and, lastly, of her total unfitness for the hard labor of the field, and the coarse association with the negroes.

The deputy sheriff was a very kind-hearted man. His sympathies were deeply moved by this recital. He mused some time. At last a ray of light broke over his face, and he looked cheerfully at Robert, and said—

"This is a well-grown girl, and your wife has had possession of her since she was an infant—that is—how many years?"

"*Thirteen, sir!*"

"And Mr. Simpson has never received any sort of wages for her?"

"Of course not, sir!"

"Nor ever asked for any?"

"Certainly not, sir; he gave the girl a free gift to his daughter, as I told you."

"And he never demanded her during all this time?"

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"Never; never *once*, until yesterday."

"Then, sir, Mr. Simpson has no sort of claim to her! You must get out a writ of replevin. Set about it at once. *I* will execute it as soon as it is placed in my hands."

"Oh, thank you! thank you, sir!" exclaimed Robert, earnestly. "Myself and wife will be everlastingly obliged to you for the interest you take in our child."

Robert then ran home quickly to inspire Lizzie with this new hope, and then set out immediately for the Court House. He found no difficulty in getting out the writ of replevin. It was placed in the hands of the deputy sheriff that evening, and he went at once to the pen where Winny was confined.

Now, I suppose you think the path was all smooth to recover Winny. Far from it. A prisoner may be released from a common prison by various processes, but to get a victim out of a pen is next to impossible. The law itself cannot do it; for the law says, that a man's house is his castle, and it forbids that house to be broken open, even by its own officers, to perform an act of justice.

The trader's house and pen were in the same

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enclosure, and if he chose to keep the door of the latter locked against the officer, no one could compel him to open it. The trader himself was no easy man to deal with. But the deputy sheriff set out *alone* on his mission, thinking that it would be less difficult for him to get admission so, than if he took with him the bailiffs. He went up to the house, and rapped at the door. The trader, ever vigilant, looked out, and seeing the officer who had actually attached the girl, he felt not the least suspicion of the object of his visit. He opened the door and admitted him. He invited him into the parlor, and asked him to sit down. There was a table sitting at an *open window*. The deputy sheriff took a seat at one end of this table, and leaning his elbow on the window-sill, looked out occasionally, noticing the passers by. The trader took the seat at the opposite end. Presently, the deputy sheriff fixed his eyes steadily upon the eyes of the trader, and said, gravely—

"*Mr. Harris, I have a writ against you!*"

"A writ!" exclaimed the trader, with a mixture of dismay and defiance.

"Yes, sir! a writ—a writ of replevin of a girl you have here!"

"Girl! girl! What girl?"

"The mulatto girl, Winny, sent here by Mr. Elisha Simpson."

"There is no such girl here, sir! There is no such girl here!"

The deputy fixed his eyes again, searchingly, menacingly, upon those of the trader, and said, sternly—

"But, *I know* that there *is*, and I am determined to have her!"

"Have her, will you?" exclaimed the trader, triumphantly. "Have her, will you? I should like to know how you'll contrive to get her! She is secure in my stronghold, and there she shall stay, until I send her off! Have her ha! I should like to see you get her!"

"I'll tell you how I shall get her, sir! You, in your haste, have admitted that she is in your pen. Very well!—now I shall sit here at this open window until I see some one pass. I shall hail them, and send them off for a *posse comitatus!* Then the whole neighborhood will rise! You cannot help it. *I* could not; and with the least excuse they will batter the walls of your pen about your ears. This latter is a *promise*, sir, not a *threat*."

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The trader turned pale. He knew that with the slightest encouragement people who disapproved him would do just so, and with a sickly affectation of a smile, he said—

"Oh! Mr. Allan, I was only jesting! You can have the girl! I care nothing about it. But *how am I to get back the three hundred dollars I paid old Simpson for her?*"

"That is *your* affair, sir. All that I am concerned for is to restore the child to her friends. So, now, if you please, sir, lose no time in bringing me to her."

The trader got up and led the way out of the house, across the enclosure, to the pen. There they entered the common room where the women were confined. They found poor Winny sitting in a distant corner, with her elbows on her knees, and her chin resting on the palms of her hands, and her hair all hanging about her face—the picture of self-neglect and despair. The deputy sheriff went up to her, but Winny, recognizing the officer who had first served the writ upon her, shrank away from him in horror.

"I will not hurt you, my poor girl! I come to take you back to your friends—rise up and follow me."

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"Yes, get up and go along," exclaimed the trader.

But Winny still shrunk away and shuddered. She remembered that the deputy sheriff *had* hurt her dreadfully *once*, and she feared he might again. It was some time before that benevolent officer could persuade her to be quiet and go with him in confidence. The deputy then led her away. It happened to be Saturday evening. Bob Orrison had gone to market to buy Sunday's dinner. Lizzie was sitting alone when the deputy sheriff with Winny approached the house. The deputy, fearing the effect of sudden joy upon one now so weak and nervous as Mrs. Orrison, deemed it prudent to leave Winny at a little distance from the house, and to go and announce her return gradually to Lizzie. He told Winny to stand at the corner while he went first to the house. But Winny, whose confidence in the deputy sheriff was now restored, was unwilling to be left. She was fearful of another arrest.

"Be at ease, child," said the deputy, "no one will dare to molest you now."

And so calming her, he walked forward to the house. Lizzie saw him coming, and ran out to meet him, pale, trembling, her face all swollen,

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and her eyes all inflamed with incessant weeping, and exclaimed—

"Oh, Mr. Allan! Mr. Allan! what about my child? Where is my child?" And she seemed about to faint with excess of anxiety.

"Your girl is safe. She will be restored to you."

"When? Where is she?"

"She is coming. She is not far behind."

Without another word, Lizzie rushed out of the gate, and all the children after her. She saw Winny—ran and caught her in her arms and wept and laughed for joy, and the children hugged and kissed her and danced about her. They saw their father coming from market, and they ran and shouted to him—

"Oh! father, Winny's come home! Winny's come home!"

And Bob Orrison dropped the market basket! and down went the leg of mutton, and away went the peas; and off rolled the potatoes, chased by the tomatoes, and Bob Orrison threw up his arms and fled helter-skelter up the road to meet Winny and to rejoice with his wife and children. And at last they got into the house with their hearts throbbing, almost dangerously, with joyous excite-

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ment. They had supper—the first supper that had been regularly got since Winny's loss. After supper, the catastrophe of the market basket was discovered, at which they all laughed very heartily, and agreed, as Bob was tired, that Mrs. Orrison and Winny should go to market, which accordingly they did.

The next morning, Mrs. Orrison said she thought that they ought all to go to church to return thanks to Almighty God for this "happy issue out of all their troubles."

Mrs. Simpson has at last discovered it to be her best interest to treat the Orrisons with civility, and so the two families are at length reconciled. And as much as it is possible for human beings to do, the Orrisons enjoy uninterrupted happiness.

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# THE THUNDERBOLT

TO

# THE HEARTH.

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.
MATTHEW vii. 27.

A FAIR southern city lay reposing on the bank of a mighty river, like Beauty upon the arm of Strength, and smiling in the beams of a bright summer sun, like Innocence in the love of God. The sky was cloudless, and the air was still and filled to faintness with the perfume of flowers. Early in the morning the dew-drops had been glittering on the leaves of every tree, shrub, and flower, in the lovely gardens of the city, and the air had been vocal with the sweet songs of birds and the glad voices of children; now the dew is exhaled from the flowers, the songs of the birds are hushed in the shade, and children are housed from the burning heat. "Bright city of the



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waters! the hour of thy doom has come. The Angel of the Whirlwind is hovering over thee, albeit thou dost not see the shadow of his wings." The hour of noon passed. Suddenly — in a moment—"in the twinkling of an eye"—the sky grew blacker than night, a noise as the roaring of mighty waters and "the rushing of mighty winds, and the beautiful city was a mass of blackened ruins. In one stately mansion, a host had assembled his guests around the convivial board—the wine-glass was in his hand, the toast upon his lips —the tornado came in power!—and host and guests, with house and board, were buried in one common ruin. In one dwelling a gray-haired man, full of years and good deeds, lay awaiting the coming of the Angel of Death. Around him stood his descendants to the third generation—a strong man in the pride and glory of mid-life, a fair matron, a young maiden, and an infant boy. The Angel came, but in the Whirlwind! and the aged grandsire, and stately son, placid matron, blooming maiden, and laughing infant, were included in his mission. In one happy home, a feeble but delighted young mother pressed her first and new-born infant to her bosom in profound joy, while the husband and father regarded

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his blessings in deep gratitude." The tornado came in power, and the youthful parents and their cherub babe formed "a holy family" in Paradise. Deep in the fragrant shades of orange groves, a youth and maiden strolled—the youth was pouring out his soul in love and prayer, while the maiden listened with deep joy—the tornado came in power! and the youth and the maiden became one angel in heaven.

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There are whirlwinds that scatter our family circles. There are tornadoes that devastate our homes. There are thunderbolts that fall at our firesides. I do not here allude to common sorrows, to reverses, to sickness, or death—*these* may be called the familiar rain and wind, thunder and lightning, of the moral atmosphere, sent to soften and fertilise, to renovate and strengthen. But the moral whirlwind, the social tornado, the thunderbolt to the hearth, has a deeper and more fearful mission. *Those* warn us of the fleeting nature of riches, of the brevity and uncertainty of life, of the constant overshadowing of the wings of death; *these* of the instability of human virtue, the frightful power of human passion.

Upon almost any day we may take up a news-

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paper, and, running our glance over its columns, we may read, here of a suicide, there of a murder. Do we ever reflect that, the day previous, nay, it may be the hour previous, the miserable perpetrator of that murder or that suicide had as little thought to commit the crime as we have at this moment; and that his or her family circle was as unprepared for such a stroke of fate as our own is at this moment—and—are we warned? And when we feel the same passions that maddened the suicide, or the murderer stirring in our bosoms, are we alarmed? I think not. We are all too apt to look upon the criminal as a wretch who has fallen into a sink of crime and degradation, near which it is impossible *we* could approach. Ah! yesterday, perhaps, yon murderer walked with head erect, as proudly, as heedlessly, as blindly, as ourselves, unknowing of the chasm opening at his feet; and now he is astounded or stunned by his own fall. Are we inclined to believe this, and pity him? No, no; our voices are loud in indignant virtue. Rivet the fetter, close bar the prison door, erect the gallows! and, in the pride of an irreproachable reputation, we thank God "that we are not as others." Do we ever think of thanking Him that we are not *tempted* as others?

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It was a pleasant picture, that scene of home-comfort. Let me describe it.

It was a middle-sized parlor, the floor was covered with an old-fashioned Turkey carpet, so thick and soft, that the foot seemed to sink into the rich oriental flowers that composed its pattern, and which looked so natural one could almost fancy the odor perceptible. Two large front windows were hidden by long and heavy curtains of crimson damask. A grand piano stood in the recess, on the left of the fireplace; a marble-top pier-table, covered with richly-bound annuals, fine engravings, and the magazines for the month, was placed in the corresponding recess to the right, and near the windows. Above the chimney-piece, was a fine old-fashioned mantel mirror, reaching from thence to the ceiling, and reflecting the whole apartment and the full-length images of the group around the hearth. Over the piano, entirely filling up the wall above it, hung a fine old painting, a winter scene; a companion piece, a smiling summer landscape, occupied the space on the wall above the book table; and on every available spot was placed choice specimens of the painter's or the sculptor's art. Now, observe the scene around the comfortable fire of anthracite coal. A round

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centre-table, covered with a rich cloth, is drawn up immediately in front of the fire-place. Above it stands a handsome solar lamp, diffusing a soft bright light over the scene; books, newspapers, an elegant work-box, open and in disorder, and a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, lying between the leaves of a pocket Bible, to keep the place. To the left of this table, and between it and the corner of the fireplace, stood a sofa, not one of those hard, uncomfortable, horse-hair concerns, yclept spring-bottomed, but a soft, luxurious lounge, well supplied with silken cushions filled with down, that might have been the delight of a sultana. Upon this lounge reclined a young woman. She is not, indeed, "beautiful as a poet's or a painter's dream," unless poets and painters dream of large, fleshy young ladies, who love butter better than Byron, oysters more than Ossian, and even prefer a basket of fine strawberries to the best-executed painting of the same. But she *was* a beauty for all that. She was young, not above nineteen, and, as I have hinted, rather on a large scale; tall, full-formed, with a round, fair face, large, lazy-looking, brown eyes, full lips, and soft, chestnut hair parted over her forehead and gathered into a knot behind. She

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wore her fine hair thus, not from a love of simplicity, but merely because it was too much trouble to dress it any other way. She had pushed away the taboret from under her feet, it was so hard, and having rolled down over it the downy cushions from the lounge, she sank the dainty little members in its softness. Near the feet of this young woman, an infant of three years old, the very image of his mother, sat, like a lazy little Turk, cross-legged, upon a cushion, nursing a lap-dog, which was sleeping in his apron. A babe of eighteen months, of a more vivacious temperament than her brother, who had been crawling about the floor, upsetting every one's comfort and temper, had, in her "exploring expedition," found a splendidly-bound annual, which, after the manner of great Powers, she appropriated in "right of discovery," and sat down quietly to tear up. Opposite the sofa, in a large easy chair, reposed an old man, with white hair. Near him sat a young man, his son; he was the husband of the indolent young lady, and the father of the infant boy and girl. I must pause to describe this young man, the centre of so many dear affections, the support of so many loved and helpless ones.



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He was a strongly-marked specimen of the nervous and sanguine temperament, tall, rather thin, with light hair, light blue eyes, and a complexion as delicate, transparent, and variable, as any woman's. Yet there was nothing effeminate in his appearance—far from it. His form and features were large, handsome, and strongly marked. The broad brow, the Roman nose, the spirit, fire, and authority of the eye, formed a *tout ensemble* the very antipodes of effeminacy. It was well I told you that the young man was the husband of the young woman upon the sofa; you would never guess it from his manner to her, which is quite as attentive as it would be towards any other lady. He is leaning back in his chair now, his arms are folded, and his glance fixed in sadness on a full-length portrait, occupying the space between the two windows. There was a wild, startling, unearthly aspect about that portrait. It represented a young girl, of fourteen years of age, of supernatural beauty, thin in form, and dark in color, with a wealth of long, black, shining hair, descending in tangled ringlets even to her feet, and eyes so large, so black, so bright, as were never seen in a sane creature. One dark arm supported a harp, the other was clasped across its

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chords; the face, stormy with expression, was raised; the crimson blood was burning through the dark cheek; the bright lips were breathlessly apart; and the large eyes were thrown up, glowing, blazing, sparkling, as though they would explode. A visitor once called this picture the Music Fiend. I was once about to inquire if it were not a fancy picture, representing a beautiful maniac, but the expression "poor Ida!" falling from the lips of the young mother, as she stood looking, with me, upon the portrait, arrested my words. Years after, I learned the history of "poor Ida," or, as I should rather have called her, frenzied Ida. I fear to touch upon the revolting story of Ida's stormy passions, their criminal indulgence, and the frightful consequences resulting from them; yet, as the consequences were fraught with death and devastation to the little family circle before us, I am compelled to sketch it slightly, but first to glance at the past history of the family to whose fireside I have introduced you. The white-haired old man in the easy chair is Mr. Reed. He had made a fortune at his business, and retired upon it some years previous to the opening of this story. He was then a widower, and his family consisted only of himself, his

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only son, William, and an orphan grand-niece, Ida de Rosia. The mother of Ida had married an Italian, she being a native of Ireland; and in Ida were conjoined the strong, deep, passionate nature of one parent, and the hasty, impulsive, excitable temperament of the other; with these an indomitable self-will, and a defective judgment, formed the organization of a being impossible to be governed, and incapable of self-control. Such was Ida de Rosia, left at ten years of age, by the death of her parents, to the care and culture of the aged Mr. Reed.

Upon William Reed's return from Harvard University, when Ida was about fifteen years old, his imagination was completely captivated by his *bizarre* cousin, and, strangely enough, his heart won. Strangely, for no two people could be more diametrically opposite in character and sentiment, *as well as* personal appearance. However, love her he did, as he never loved any other woman before or since, no, not even Emily May, the fair girl whom he afterwards married. But Ida laughed him and his passion to scorn. He was entirely too commonplace for her imaginative ladyship.

About this time, a tragedian of great histrionic

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talent appeared upon the boards of the most fashionable of the city theatres. Ida accompanied her uncle's family once to see him. It was the first time Ida had ever entered a theatre, and, as her party took their seats in the dress circle, she was too *new*, her beauty too unique, and her interest in all that was going forward too fresh, not to attract attention. I do not know whether there is anything in magnetic fascination or not, but I *do* know that, unmindful of the crowd, unconscious of their strictures, the burning gaze of Ida was fixed with rapt joy on the speaker, as she listened to his eloquent declamation of the glorious poetry of the piece; and that soon his glance fell upon the entranced girl; and that, ever after, during the progress of the play, when he had occasion to face the audience, in giving many of the finest passages of his part, his glance would rest with meaning upon the face of Ida, whose cheek would glow and whose eyes would burn beneath the look and the words.

Upon the conclusion of the piece, the "star" inquired of one of his friends who that enthusiastic child was that sat near the centre of the dress circle. He was told, and, having the *entree* into the most genteel circles of the city, he soon found

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means to effect an introduction to the family of Mr. Reed. The simple, unsuspicious old man, and the high-minded young one, never dreamed of evil intended, and extended their hospitality to the profligate, whose name was Vinton, with the most sincere pleasure. His intimacy with the family continued during the whole time of his engagement in the city. In this time, he had obtained a complete mastery over the will and the fate of his intended victim, and, at the close of his engagement, found no difficulty in making her his *compagnon du voyage* to Europe. He was not wholly influenced by the passion of love; vanity and cupidity bore their part in inducing him to carry off the beautiful and gifted Ida. In addition to her remarkable beauty, Ida possessed an unequalled talent for music, and a voice of surpassing melody and power, with an *expression* of music indescribable, but which you will understand when you look upon her portrait. Vinton knew the full value of these gifts in his profession. It was he who called her "The Music Fiend." His vanity, therefore, was gratified by the thought of introducing into the principal opera-houses of the chief capitals of Europe a new "star," of the first magnitude and brilliance, and one whom he

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could call his own, without the ties of marriage. His cupidity was excited by the thought of the immense sums she would realize, and which her child-like ignorance of the world would enable him to pocket. And this was the mean wretch, whom the frantic Ida had imagined possessed of all the virtues about which he could so eloquently declaim; to follow whom she had left country, home, and friends, fair fame and peace of mind! Great was the consternation of the Reeds, on discovering the elopement of Ida. It was then that William Reed swore in his wrath, "If ever Vinton crosses my path, I will shoot him as I would a mad dog—I will crush him to death as I would a reptile."

Her friends continued to see her name occasionally in the newspapers. Now she was drawing crowds in London, now in Paris, then in Vienna, but for the last two years no mention had been made of her name. She seemed to have glanced across the musical world, as a bright meteor, astonishing and entrancing all by her brilliance and beauty, and then to have sunk into darkness and oblivion.

A few months after the escapade of Ida, William Reed married Emily May. And now w

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will return from this long and dark digression, and look once more at their pleasant little family circle.

The old man closed the Bible, in which he had been reading, and, removing his spectacles and folding them together, placed them, with the book, upon the centre-table. The young husband drew a newspaper from his pocket, and commenced reading it aloud. Here he entertained his listeners with a speech reported from Congress; there an account of some destructive fire; here the proceedings of a Temperance meeting; there a criticism on some popular lecturer; and frequent and critical were the remarks of the old man, and even of the lazy beauty, on the various topics of the paper. At length, among other matters, was an account of a street rencontre between two young men, which resulted in the death of one of them, and the arrest and imprisonment of the other. This took place in a distant city. This paragraph was read and heard without comment—*it was so common*—and the reader passed on to other matters, until the newpsaper was finished, folded up, and put away. No presentiment whispered to that man's proud heart, that, ere another hour, he himself would form the

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subject of another such paragraph; that, in another hour, a thunderbolt would descend upon his hearth, and make desolate his home. Having put away his newspaper, he arose and reached his hat to go out. The indolent beauty raised herself with an effort, and, passing into the dining-room, poured out a glass of brandy and water, which she brought in and handed to her husband, saying—

"Drink this, dear; it will fortify you against the cold."

The young man thanked her, and emptied the glass at a draught. I would she had not given him that glass of brandy!

In a neighboring street, not far from the mansion of the Reeds, two young men met and passed; in an instant, however, one turned sharply round, and laying his hand roughly on the shoulder of the other, wheeled him round, so that they stood face to face. He exclaimed, "Ho! villain, has the Devil deserted you at last, and left you to my vengeance?"

The stranger stepped back, drew himself up haughtily, and said sternly, though with perfect self-possession—

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"Who are you, sir; and what mean you by making such an assault upon a gentleman?"

"*Who am I?* The avenger of—of *her*—your victim. Who am I? *Your executioner*," said William Reed.

"Ah!" said the stranger, laughing sarcastically, "I know you now; the foolish lover of that silly girl who fluttered around a certain brilliant light until her wings were singed. Well, what do you mean to do?"

"Miscreant! to punish you as you deserve!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Vinton. "Well, set about it; only be quick, for a wedding-party and a bride await my coming."

"Sarcastic devil! you go not to that wedding-party; you embrace not that bride. Answer! for your life hangs upon your answer. Where is your victim?"

"I do not wish to harm you, my good fellow," said Vinton, with cool contempt, "let me pass."

Reed raised and levelled a pistol, as he hissed between his teeth—

"Where is Ida de Rozia?"

"Do you not *really* know then? Have you never chanced to meet her in the streets at night?

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"Fiend!" roared Reed, "the foulest ever yet loose upon earth! Where is she? Tell me, and then descend to perdition!"

"You may find her—at the Five Points," said Vinton, suddenly thrusting Reed aside, and passing on.

Delirious with passion, Reed raised his pistol and fired.

Vinton fell, shot through the heart. A crowd gathered; the murderer gave himself up, and was thrown into prison.

Come with me to another home, o'er which the storm-cloud lowered, yet cast no warning shadow. It was a stately mansion; from its lofty windows streamed a blaze of brilliant light. Rich strains of music floated through its halls; before its gates a crowd of carriages were drawn up. Agnes Ray, the only daughter and heiress of that house, was about to be given in marriage. Let us enter the bride's dressing-room. It is on the first floor—this handsome mahogany door to the right will admit us. You will fancy yourself in the bower of some royal Eastern beauty. Large mirrors, in highly polished frames of costly wood, reflect and multiply the gorgeous furniture; curtains of rich crimson silk drape the windows; cushions and

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ottomans, covered with the richest velvet, lie scattered upon the soft carpets. Fresh flowers are blooming in costly vases, and the air is filled with their fragrance. But the bride! she is standing before a mirror, and an attendant maiden is putting the finishing touch upon her gorgeous toilet by placing above her bright ringlets the wreath of orange flowers. She is standing before the mirror, but her gaze is not fixed upon the beautiful and queenly form reflected there. Her large dark eyes are tenderly veiled by her long lashes, her rich lips are gently severed, and a roseate bloom is stealing into her cheeks. A still, bright joy is breathing from her face. A step approaches, an arm encircles the waist of Agnes, while a sweetly modulated voice addressed the maidens, saying—

"Leave us alone a few moments, dear girls; remain in the hall until the arrival of the bridegroom and his friends; it will not be long; the Bishop is already in the drawing-room."

The young ladies retired, and left Agnes alone with her mother. This lady was still in the prime of womanhood and in the pride of beauty. Her graceful and majestic figure was set off by a rich and tasteful costume. Drawing Agnes to

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her bosom, and smiling through her starting tears, she said—

"You are very, very happy, my own darling. is it not so?"

"Fearfully happy, dearest mamma; I tremble lest it should not last. Is it not ominous? I feel as though in some blissful dream, from which I dread to be awakened."

"Long may'st thou dream, Agnes!"

The mother and daughter sat in a silent embrace some minutes, the hearts of both too full, the minds of both too busy for conversation. At length, approaching steps and agitated voices were heard in the hall, and the mother, embracing and releasing her daughter, said—

"They have come, Agnes. Are you quite ready, my own girl?"

"Quite ready, dearest mamma."

"Then I will call the girls. The people in the hall are making more noise than necessary, it seems to me. Really it is in very bad taste."

The lady walked towards the door. The steps and voices approached the door from the hall; a voice was heard, in hurried tones, exclaiming—

"Oh! not in there! not in there! it is Miss Ray's room."

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At the same instant a shriek burst from one of the maidens in the hall. The door was thrown open, and Fanny, the youngest of the bridesmaids, rushed into the room, exclaiming—

"Oh! Mrs. Ray! Mrs. Ray! Mr. Vinton has been murdered—shot through the heart by a man in the street—and they are bringing him in here!"

There was a sound of hurrying feet at the same instant, and even while she spoke, the ghastly and blood-stained corpse of Vinton was borne into the room. With the sharp cry of one who had received a death wound, Agnes fell.

"Oh God! what cruel, cruel thoughtlessness! You've killed her," groaned Mrs. Ray, as she flew to raise her stricken daughter, and laid her upon a couch. The men had retreated in dismay from the room, taking with them their horrid burden. At the same time, Mr. Ray, the father of the bride, entered the room, drew near his daughter's couch, and, while he assisted to chafe her hands and temples, gave, in answer to his wife's agitated inquiries, a hurried account of the scene in the street, and its fatal termination, as he had heard it from others. The death-like swoon of Agnes continued so long that it was thought advisable

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summon a physician, whose carriage drove up at the very moment of the arrival of the coroner and his attendants, and amid the confused departure of the wedding guests. Let us leave with the others, and return to the little drawing-room on —— street.

"Call in the domestics, dear Emily, we will have prayers," said the old man.

"Will you not wait for William a *little* longer, father? You know he does not often tax our patience."

"No, my dear; it is twelve o'clock, and these late hours don't agree with me."

The servants were summoned, the evening devotions concluded, and the old man took his lamp to retire to rest; turning to Emily, he said—

"Emily, my dear child, do not sit up. You will injure your health. Go to bed, love."

"I am going, father," said she.

"You are not one of those fidgety women, who are all anxiety and nervousness, if their husbands are absent after hours."

"No, indeed, dear father; but is it strange?"

"It is your serene temperament, my love."

"Yet, indeed father, I would prefer sitting up for William, only he has enjoined me not to do it

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and though he never says anything unkind, he looks annoyed when he finds me waiting."

Emily went to bed, and, having sat up beyond her usual hour, soon fell asleep. Dawn was peeping in at the windows when Emily awoke. Missing her husband from her side, the consciousness of his unaccountable absence fell like lead upon her heart. Rising up, she gazed around, but no vestige of his presence, no hat, gloves, or cane, were there. She rang the bell and proceeded to dress. Her maid came in.

"Is Mr. Reed below?" inquired Emily.

"No madam," was the answer.

With a mountain of anxiety upon her mind, yet possessing too much delicacy to make inquiries of the servants, on a subject of such questionable propriety as her husband's mysterious absence all night, Emily descended to the breakfast-room. The windows in this apartment looked out upon the street. She took her station at one of them, from which she continued to gaze up and down the pavement. Thus passed three weary, heavy hours, and then the breakfast equipage was brought in, and soon after the old gentleman came down, in his dressing-gown and slippers. Seating himself at the table, he said—

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"Come, my love, give me a cup of coffee. But where is William; not up yet? What time did he come in last night? But, my love, you look really ill. What is the matter?"

"Oh! father," said she, taking her place at the head of the table, "William did not come home *at all* last night; and he has not come home yet; and I am *so* uneasy."

"Do you know anything that can have kept him out all night?"

"No, indeed; I wish I did, father."

"He never was so unaccountably absent before?"

"Yes, you know, *once*, father, he was unexpectedly called upon, while out, to sit up with a dying friend, and he sent a note by a boy, but the boy never brought it, and so I was very uneasy."

"Yes, I remember. Oh! well, something of the same kind has happened now, you may depend. We shall see or hear from him presently. Your uneasiness is groundless, for, of course, if anything evil had happened to him, you would have known it before this. 'Bad news travels quickly,' you know, my child."

Yes; "bad news travels quick," but not such bad news as awaited this doomed family. It was



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curious, was it not, that, while all the city rang with the murder, and the names of the parties, the family most fatally interested in the dire event remained in total ignorance of its occurrence? It is easily explainable, though. All of their friends and acquaintances had heard of the affair, but all and each took it for granted that the stricken family must be more thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances than any one else, and they refrained from intruding upon the wife and the father, in the first hours of their grievous affliction.

"And so you think there is no ground for uneasiness, dear father?"

"I do, my love. Now pour out my coffee, Emily."

She did as he requested, but her own cup remained empty.

"Are these the morning papers, Job?" inquired the old gentleman of the waiter, as he received from him several newspapers.

"Yes, sir," answered the man.

The old gentleman selected one, and began to read it. Column after column passed under his review; at last, a paragraph met his eye as I riveted his gaze.

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"My God!" exclaimed he, "what is this?" He let fall the paper, and, bowing his head upon his hands, groaned aloud.

"What is it, my dear father?" inquired Emily, anxiously.

"I am ill, Emily, I am ill. I will go out into the air," said the poor old man, as he retired to reflect in what manner he should break to Emily the intelligence, first made known to himself through the columns of a newspaper, and also what could now be done for his unhappy son.

The paper which had fallen from his hands had been left forgotten upon the carpet. It was picked up by Emily, who began to search for the cause of her father's agitation, never remotely suspecting the truth.

The old man was leaning with his head bowed down upon his hands, his silver hair drooping over them, when a soft hand was laid upon his arm, and a gentle voice murmured—

"I know it all, now, dear father. Let us go to the prison."

The old man looked up, and Emily was standing behind him, pale, sorrowful, but perfectly composed.

"I am much relieved to see you take this so

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well, Emily," said the old man, and he mentally reproached her with insensibility, until looking upon her face, he saw his mistake.

We have hinted that Emily Reed was not of that nervous temperament that gives vivacious outward indications of feeling, or of that demonstrative manner that breaks forth into loud expressions of grief. There was no fainting, no shrieking, no wringing of the hands, no, nor even the contracted brow, or quivering lip—yet there was that unmistakable impress of heart-breaking sorrow upon the marble face, more painful to the beholder than all.

We will not sketch the meeting between William Reed and his family. It is sufficient to say, that he was very much shaken, the old man wept, and that Emily was the deepest though the most quiet sufferer of all. Emily obtained permission to pass as many hours in her husband's cell, by day or night, as she could spare from her children.

The day upon which the court was to sit drew near. The friends of William Reed grew more anxious as the time of the trial approached, yet their lawyer spoke assuredly of getting an honorable verdict. His partisans talked loudly and indiscreetly of their sanguine expectations. This

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provoked opposition. Attacks were made upon them, both by the mouths of the people and by the press. "Oh, yes!" it was said, "he is a 'ruffled shirt rascal,' and can do as he pleases!"

"Hang one of the 'upper ten thousand,' indeed! If it had been a poor man, now, they would not have waited for judge or jury, but strung him up at the first lamp-post."

"To be sure; but he is a crumb of the 'upper crust,' and the criminal code was only made for the poor."

The trial came on. The public mind being so excited against the prisoner, it was long before an unprejudiced jury could be empannelled. At length this was effected, and the case commenced. The witnesses on the part of the Commonwealth were chiefly summoned from among the crowd who saw the termination only of the rencontre. Their testimony did not, however, bear fatally upon the prisoner. At length, towards the close of the sitting, a witness was called, who swore that, upon a certain day, he had heard the accused declare, with an oath, that, if ever he met Vinton, he would "shoot him as a mad dog"—he would "crush him to death as a reptile." With this, the evidence for the State closed, and this ended

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the second day. Upon the third day, the defence was entered upon. It was a very able effort, and occupied two days. On the evening of the fourth day from the commencement of the trial, the case was finally given to the jury.

The next day, when the court met, the room was crowded to suffocation. The verdict was expected to be rendered. The crowd are breathless with expectation. See! the doors are thrown open; the foreman of the jury advances, followed by his colleagues. He carries a sealed packet in his hand; he hands it to the judge upon the bench. "*It is the verdict.*" Observe the prisoner. He is sitting with his counsel; he is perfectly still; his manner appears quite composed, yet without an affectation of indifference or stoicism, for his looks are steadily fixed upon the judge as he receives the packet. The kindly disposed among the crowd in the court-room and among the reporters on yonder seats, will probably represent his manner to have been dignified and self-possessed, while the censorious of their number will report the prisoner hardened and insensible; but —draw near, it is not so—see, as the judge arises, the keenly anxious gaze of the prisoner's eye—observe, the bright hectic spot has gone in from

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his marble cheek, and a slight tremor agitates his frame. Near him sits his wife and the old father; but look not on that group, it will unman you. The judge is on his feet; his countenance is stern and sad.

"Let the prisoner be placed at the bar."

"All was over, then! Reed arose, and having pressed the hand of his wife, which had been lying in his own, attended by an officer, he took the indicated place. The judge addressed the prisoner as follows—

"William Harvey Reed! you have been fully and impartially tried for the dreadful crime of murder, and, in accordance with the evidence, a verdict of GUILTY has been rendered by a jury, carefully selected from among your fellow-citizens. Hence, it becomes my most painful duty to announce to you the sentence of the law." Here, placing upon his head the black cap (that grim piece of frivolity), he proceeded to pronounce the death sentence.

That sentence with its revolting minuteness of detail, is too familiar to all, to need a repetition here. Children know it by rote. William Reed received it with an unflinching brow, and, at its close upon the command, "Remove the prison-

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er," he turned with perfect self-possession, and yielded himself to the custody of the officers in waiting.

Passing near where his wife was lying on the bosom of his father, he asked—

"Has she fainted?"

The old man looked up with a bewildered smile! The old man was an idiot!

"Better so, better so," groaned William Reed, as he followed the officers from the room.

A petition was set on foot, which, having received the signatures of hundreds of the most respectable citizens, was sent to the Governor. But the people were bitter against the condemned; they demanded his life; they would have a spectacle! It was an "electioneering crisis." The pardon was refused: the death-warrant was signed, and the Governor rose in popularity.

It was early in the morning, about two months after his condemnation, that Reed was sitting on the edge of his mattress, Emily kneeling beside him, an open Bible on the bed before her, when the warden of the prison and the sheriff entered the cell with the final decision of the Governor and the death-warrant. Guessing their dreadful

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errand by their looks, and wishing to spare her the trial, Reed turned to his wife, and said—

"Dear Emily, I will trouble you to step out, and procure some paper for me."

Emily arose to do as she was requested, and was going towards the door, when, looking keenly at the men, she stopped short, and, turning back, placed herself beside her husband, and, passing one arm around him, as though to shield him from harm, she said—

"Some new trouble awaits you, dear William, and I must stay to see you through it. There is nothing you are called to endure that I must not try to bear with you."

"Emily," said Reed, "you never refused me aught before; will you now refuse to leave me alone with these gentlemen, when I entreat you to do so?"

"No; I will go," said Emily, and she tottered across the room, through the door, and out into the lobby; there, from utter exhaustion, she sank down upon a bench. Emily was frightfully altered since her first introduction to the reader. The beautiful contour of her form and face was gone her figure was shrunken, bowed, and tottering with debility; her face pale, her eyes sunken and

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her cheek-bones prominent; yet her deportment was always quiet, and her words were cheering and reviving, so that many people said—

"How little she is affected by her trials! They would kill me."

But such people were superficial observers. There was one who knew better; one who saw with unspeakable anguish the daily "falling off" of this devoted wife; one who knew that *she never rested by day nor slept by night;* one who *felt* that she was dying; yet her words were always comforting, and her smile was always sweet; for she could smile, when speaking of redemption, of faith, of hope, of God! of heaven.

At the end of half an hour, the gentlemen came out from the cell, and left the prisoner without a vestige of earthly hope remaining. When they had left the lobby, Emily re-entered the cell.

"Come hither, dear one. I may not cheat thee with hope longer. My fate is sealed, Emily!"

If this death-stroke transfixed the heart of Emily, no outward sign proclaimed it. Seating herself on the stool at his feet, she took both his hands in hers, and, looking up into his face, she said, in a steady though faint voice,

"I know it, dearest, I know it. I know it

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when you sent me out. I saw it in the faces of those men. Ah! do not send me from your side again. Let me stay with you, and try to comfort you through all, even unto the last. You know, as father said, I am not nervous."

"May God bless and sustain thee, my angel wife. It shall be as thou wilt. This is Monday. To-day, dearest, we must settle up all earthly matters that require my attention, and, after to-day, turn our thoughts resolutely from the world, and fix them on eternal things. I must see an attorney, and make my will. I wish to leave the children to the conjoint guardianship of yourself and Dr. Hyde, and then to resign myself; yet, oh! Emily, when I think of leaving you, utterly unprotected, in the dreadful position of a convict's widow; and my poor old father driven into dotage by severe affliction; and the infant children with a dishonored name——

"God liveth," interposed the gentle voice of his wife. "Have faith, have hope. The old man will soon rest in peace. I will bear up. Thy children shall be well reared. Do not fear for them or me; think only of thyself, of what thou would'st yet have done, and then turn to God."

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It was the night previous to the day on which the execution was fixed to take place. The condemned lay upon his mattress in a heavy sleep, the first that had descended upon him for many nights. Emily was kneeling before his bed; the Bible lay open before her. She had read to him from that blessed book, until his weary eyes closed in sleep. The deep silence was at length broken by the sound of hammers; it fell unheeded upon the ears of Emily. After a while, rising, she passed up and down the cell floor; presently, she paused before the window and looked out, with a suppressed cry; covering her face with her hands, she staggered forward, and fell upon the low bed; sinking thence upon her knees, she lifted up her hands and voice, and prayed—

"Oh! God; not yet, not yet. Spare and strengthen thy handmaid a few hours longer, that the stricken and doomed one before thee may not see the death of his wife, may not know the depth of her sufferings."

Strengthened by this prayer, Emily recovered from the effects of the shock that had well nigh brought her shattered frame to dissolution. And though the horrid gibbet, intercepting the moonbeams, threw its dark shadow athwart the cell, and



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though the hammers of the workmen employed upon it sounded in her ears, she maintained her composure until the morning. Day was scarcely dawning, when the unhappy prisoner awoke. Seeing Emily lying still upon the mattress, he supposed she slept, and, inwardly thanking Heaven that it was so, resolved to avoid waking her as long as possible. Arising, and dressing himself quickly and quietly, he fell upon his knees; at this moment Emily arose, and, coming round, knelt beside him. Their prayer was fervent, though not long. They arose; their eyes met.

"Take courage, dearest," said William Reed. "Our sharp trial will soon be passed, now: and we feel the supporting arm of God, do we not, Emily?"

"Ah! yes; how far more merciful is God than man!" said she.

An hour was passed in comforting and sustaining each other, in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer. At the end of that time, the warden of the prison entered, ushering in Dr. Hyde, their own beloved pastor; old Mr. Reed, the father; and the two children of the prisoner. They had all come to bid farewell to the condemned, except Dr. Hyde, who intended to remain with him to

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the last. Dr. Hyde shook hands affectionately with William Reed and Emily; the old man threw himself upon the bosom of his son, and wept. To prevent the enervating effect of their sorrowful meeting, the good pastor proposed prayer; and the little family bowed once more, and for the last time together, before the Throne of Mercy. When they arose from their prayer, William Reed took his girl and boy upon his knees, and the old pastor sat down among them, repeating from time to time such strengthening texts of Scripture as he thought appropriate. They had spent an hour thus, when the warden reappeared at the door, and summoned Dr. Hyde, who left the cell an instant, and, re-entering, took William Reed apart, and said—

"Shall I take your family home now?"

"If you please, my dear sir—and oh! remember I leave them in your care."

The pastor pressed his hands in silence, and, going up to the old man, who had happily relapsed into imbecility, he said, "We will go now." The old man made no opposition, and he and the children, after being fervently embraced by the prisoner, left the cell. Emily still remained. William Reed was thus left alone with the two beings

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most beloved and esteemed, and most capable of giving him comfort and strength in this hour of his bitter extremity. But he was not so happy as to be permitted to remain so during the few hours of life left to him. Their sacred privacy was soon violated, by the entrance into the cell of the sheriff, the warden, two clergymen of different denominations, a couple of newspaper reporters, and an under turnkey, with a large white garment thrown over his arm, and a long cap in his hand. These are needless and cruel insults, usually, and, I believe, thoughtlessly, offered to the capital criminal on the day of his execution. Why should a set of persons, filled with morbid curiosity, be obtruded upon a condemned man, in the last few hours of his life? and why should a *shroud* be placed upon his living form, since these cruelties *are not even* "*in the bond*," sanguinary as it is?

The prisoner was standing at the end of the room farthest from the door when these gentlemen entered. He was conversing with Dr. Hyde and Emily. Upon their entrance he turned to the former and said, in a whisper—

"You must take her home now."

And turning to Emily, he said—

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"Emily, my own faithful one! come to my arms once more; and stay your heart on God, my love; we must part now."

He strained her to his bosom in a last embrace, then, relinquishing her to the care of Dr. Hyde, who supported her from the room, placed her in his carriage, and drove with her home. The drive was gone through in perfect silence by both. Arrived at her house, the carriage stopped, the steps were let down, and Dr. Hyde, getting out, assisted Emily to alight. Seeing that she could not stand, that she was deadly pale and cold, and her respiration short, quick, and labored, he raised her in his arms, bore her to her chamber, laid her upon her bed, and summoned her maid. Emily appeared to be dying; a cold clammy sweat broke out upon her brow, and she breathed in gasps. She had not yet attempted to speak, but, seeing the doctor linger, she said, in broken sentences and an expiring voice—

"Return to him—do not tell him I am dying—comfort him—sustain him—and when—when all is over—come back to me."

With the tears streaming from his eyes, the pastor went to execute his mission. He returned to the condemned cell, prayed with, comforted,

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strengthened the prisoner; attended him upon the scaffold, received his dying requests, and, in half an hour afterwards, took charge of his remains, and, having seen them prepared for burial, went back to the *widow*.

He found her lying in extreme prostration, but sensible of his approach. She turned her glassy eyes upon him. He did not tell her anything; it was needless. She saw him by her bedside, and knew that all was done.

Did Emily Reed die? Reader! *the heart stayed upon God, however sadly, sternly tried, never breaks.* And one whose feelings are always under the control of religious principle may be bruised and bowed, but never broken, never felled. The tension had been long and tight—nature had been severely tasked—and for weeks Emily Reed lay trembling between life and death, in a state of nervous excitability, that could not bear the sound of a footfall, or the admission of a ray of light into her darkened chamber, yet she lived; and it is worthy of remark, that, while Agnes Ray, the undisciplined child of passion, was maddened by the sight of her lover's dead body, and while her parents were left in childless desolation, Emily Reed, through her infinitely



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more severe trials, called on God, bore up and lived. Nor was her life passed in vain regret, or unavailing gloom. She knew that she should best honor her husband's memory, by devoting herself cheerfully to the moral and intellectual culture of his children. She lived, and her life was rich—rich in the affections of her children; rich in the esteem of her friends; rich in good deeds; and rich in the hope of a blessed reunion in Heaven.

THE END.

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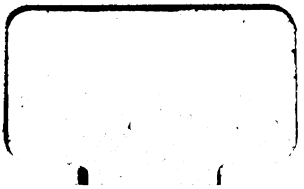

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